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Wherwell Abbey and its cartulary

Bucknill, Rhoda Pamela

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WHERWELL ABBEY AND ITS CARTULARY

A THESIS PRESENTED TO KING'S COLLEGE,

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

in fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Rhoda P. Bucknill

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ABSTRACT

The core of the thesis is a study of the fourteenth-century cartulary of the nunnery of Wherwell Abbey which survives in a single unedited manuscript in London, BL Egerton 2104A. Although documents from the cartulary have been noted by scholars such as N.Vincent and M.J. Franklin in their compilations of the *Episcopal Acta VIII & IX*, for the diocese of Winchester, and by D. Coldicott in *Hampshire Nunneries* (1989), there is no substantial study based on the manuscript.

Part I reconstructs the history of Wherwell, from its birth in the late Anglo-Saxon period, through to the fourteenth century. After examining the contents and structure of the cartulary, Chapter 2 goes on to discuss the origins and development of this little known royal foundation, with special reference to the organisation of its prebends. Chapter 3 analyses the economic history of the abbey. The people of Wherwell are the focus of Chapter 4. Wherwell had two abbesses of exceptional vigour: Matilda de Baillieul (?1174-1213) and her niece, Euphemia de Walliers (1213-1257). There is interesting evidence concerning the abbey's stewards and prominent local families as well as some of the abbey's smaller tenants. Finally, Chapter 5 is devoted to an account of the abbey's struggle to maintain its rights in regard to tithes, clerical patronage and the forest.

What emerges is a picture of a significant religious and agrarian community, fully integrated into the social world of its region, in whose history is reflected some of the major events of the period: the wars of Matilda and Stephen; the impact of the famine and plague of the fourteenth century, and the Hundred Years War.

Part II forms an extended Appendix. It presents a transcription of the full Latin text of the Table of Contents (ff.3r-13v), which provides useful summaries of all the documents. The largest section of Part II, however, comprises a select English calendar of those charters and documents which are cited in the discussions in Part I.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was Diana Coldicott, who first introduced me to the Wherwell Cartulary, BL Egerton 2104A, and without her initial enthusiasm and encouragement, this preliminary effort at editing the Wherwell Cartulary would never have been launched. We share the privilege of living within a few miles of Wherwell.

The problem of transcribing and translating the texts of the 500 or so documents has been daunting, and would have been quite impossible without the help of Prof. David Carpenter and Prof. Anne Duggan; in addition to this, as my supervisors, they have constantly enlarged my understanding of the material before me. Leslie Wynne-Davies was also generous with her time as I struggled to master the hand. Dr. Elizabeth Danbury was particularly helpful with regard to interpretation of the later texts, and Dr. Paul Brand gave invaluable help with the French documents.

It has been a great pleasure to find that my work on the unedited Wherwell documents has coincided with archaeological work on the site of Wherwell Abbey by Dr. Kate Clark and Mr. Edward Roberts, and they have both have shared their findings, and welcomed my own work. Others to whom I am grateful for encouragement and advice include Prof. Barbara Yorke, Dr. Nicholas Vincent, Prof. Jinty Nelson, Mr. Jim Bolton, Dr. Sarah Lewin, Dr. Michael Hicks, and Mr. Richard Eales.

Without the friendship and support of numerous fellow students over the years, both at King's and at the IHR, this would have been a heartless task. To all, therefore, I extend my thanks. Back home, I have been very fortunate to be able to enjoy the friendship of Margaret Ross, who with great skill, has helped me compile my Illustrations. Finally, I would like to record the unfailing loyalty, faith and support of my husband David, who has patiently stood by me throughout the project.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Analecta Bollandiana.*
AM	*Annales Monastici* ed. H.R. Luard, 5 Vols. RS 36.
ANTS	Anglo Norman Text Society Publication.
ASC	*Anglo Saxon Charters.*
ASChron.	*Anglo Saxon Chronicle.*
ASE	*Anglo Saxon England.*
Book of Fees	*Liber Feodorum: Testa de Neville* Part I 1198-1242; II 1242-1293 (London, 1920-23)
CCR	*Calendar of Close Rolls.*
CChR	*Calendar of Charter Rolls*
CFA	*Calendar of Feudal Aids*
CIPM	*Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*
CIM	*Calendar of Inquistions Miscellaneous*
CLR	*Calendar of Liberate Rolls*
CPL	*Calendar of Entries in the Papal Register relating to Great Britain & Ireland: Papal Letters,* 9 vols., ed. W.H. Bliss (London, 1893-1912)
CPP	*Calendar of Entries in the Papal Register relating to Great Britain & Ireland: Petitions to the Pope,* ed. W.H. Bliss, (London, 1896).
CR	*Close Rolls*
Chatteris	*The Cartulary of Chatteris Abbey* ed. C. Breay (Woodbridge, 1999)
ChronMaj	*Matthaei Parisiensis Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora* ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols, RS 57 (London, 1884-89).
CPR	*Calendar of Patent Rolls*
C & Y.	Canterbury & York Society Publications.
DB	*Domesday Book 4, Hampshire,* ed. J.Munby (Chichester, 1968).
Drokensford	*Calendar of Register of John Drokensford, Bishop of Bath & Wells, 1309-39* (Somerset Record Society I, 1887).
EcHR	*Economic History Review*
EEA	*English Episcopal Acta*
EHD	*English Historical Documents*
EHR	*English Historical Review*

Fasti	*Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300,* ed.D.E. Greenway, 6 vols. (London 1968-1999).
Flores	*Flores Historiarum* ed. H.R. Luard, 3 Vols. RS 95 (London, 1890)
Gesta Regum	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* ed. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson & M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998).
HCC	Hampshire County Council.
Heads	*Heads of Religious Houses in England & Wales 940-1216* ed. D. Knowles & C.N.L. Brooke (Cambridge, 1972)
HRS	Hampshire Record Series
JEccH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
Kalendarium	National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg. NLR MS. Q.v.I, 62 (formerly, the Leningrad *Kalendarium*; Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad) HRO COPY/606/1
Monasticon	Dugdale, W., *Monasticon Anglicanum II* (London, 1817).
Nom.Vill.	*Nomina Villarum for Hampshire, 1316.* ed. D.L.J. Warner (Whitchurch, 1981)
Parl.Writs	*Parliamentary Writs I & II,* ed. F. Palgrave
P&P	*Past & Present*
PHFC	*Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club,* now *Hampshire Studies.*
Pipe.Winch.	*Pipe Rolls of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301-02 & 1409-10* ed. M. Page (HRS 1996 & 1999).
PQW	*Placita de Quo Warranto temp. Eduardi I, II, & III in curia receptae scaccarii Westminster* (London, 1881).
PR	*Pipe Rolls.*
PRS	*Pipe Rolls Society Publications.*
RB	*Revue Benedictine.*
Reg.d'Inn	*Registres d'Innocent IV,* ed. E. Berger (Paris, 1921).
Reg. Edington	*Register of William Edington, Bishop of Winchester 1346-66,* ed. S.F. Hockey, 2 Vols., HRS 7 (1986-87).
Reg.Gand.	*Registrum Simonis Gandavo,* 2 Vols., ed. M.C.B. Dawes (C & Y XL, 1934).

Reg.Mart.	*Registrum Rogeri Martival Episcopi Sarisbriensis* ed. K. Edwards (C & Y LV, 1960).
Reg. Osmund.	*Registrum Sancti Osmundi Episcopi,* 2. Vols, ed.W.H. Rich Jones, RS 78 (London 1884).
Reg. Pont.	*Registrum Johannis de Pontissara, episcopi Wintoniensis 1282-1304,* ed. C. Deedes, (C&Y XIX & XXX,1915-24).
Reg. Sand.	*Registers of John Sandale & Rigaud de Asserio, Bishops of Winchester 1316-23,* ed. F.J. Baigent (HRS, 1897)
Reg. Wood.	*Registum Henrici Woodlock, diocesis Wintoniensis 1305-16,* ed. A.W. Goodman, (C&Y XXXXIII-IV, 1940-1).
RS	Rolls Series
RLC	*Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londonensis I, 1204-1224,* ed. T. Duffus Hardy (Record Commission)
Southwick	*Cartularies of Southwick Priory,* 2 vols, ed. K.A.Hanna. (HRS 10, 1988).
SS	Selden Society Publications
Taxatio	*Taxatio Ecclesistica Angliae et Wallie, auctoritate Papae Nicolai IV* (London, 1802)
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
Vie Vulfhilde	'La vie de Sainte Vulfhilde par Goscelin,' ed. M. Esposito *AB* 32 (1913).
WCM	*Winchester College Muniment Collection: a descriptive list in 3 vols.* ed. S. Himsworth (Chichester, 1976).

INTRODUCTION

Wherwell, lies about 8 miles north west of Winchester (Part II, Fig.1Q.) The abbey was built on a picturesque island site, formed by the convergence of various channels of the river Test and its smaller tributary, the Dever (Part II, Fig.2). Wherwell and its neighbouring villages spread up the valley, and are surrounded by fine alluvial meadows and pasture. Chalk downlands rise above the Test Valley at this point, to a height of 200-300ft. The topsoil is very light, offering some arable land and grazing. Over 800 acres have been woodland since pre-historic times.

There is little to show, today, that the abbey ever existed. According to a poignant inscription in Wherwell churchyard erected in 1649, the Benedictine nunnery of Wherwell Abbey was

> 'demolished by the overacted seale or avarice of King Henry, and of its last ruines here buried there yet remains this monument.'

Thus an attempt was made by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell to consign nearly five hundred years of history to oblivion. They might have succeeded but for the survival of the fourteenth-century cartulary, BL. Egerton 2104A, which is the subject of this thesis. An analysis of its contents and suggestions as to the circumstances of its compilation are the subject of Chapter 1.

It is quickly obvious that the cartulary alone cannot give a full picture of the story of Wherwell abbey. Domesday apart, there are virtually no documents relating to the late Anglo-Saxon and Norman eras, excepting the important diploma of King Ethelred. Nor is it possible to perceive the origin of Wherwell hundred from the

cartulary. Nevertheless, the foundation is the subject of Chapter 2. Although the cartulary offers several different versions of this event, the abbey was almost certainly founded by Queen Elfthryth, wife of King Edgar (959-975). It was wholly in the royal tradition that Elfthryth chose to found a house of her own at Wherwell, and tradition has it that she founded Amesbury Abbey a few years previously.[1] With the foundation of these two houses, the number of nunneries associated with Alfred the Great's descendants in Wessex grew to six, the earlier foundations being Wilton (c.830), Shaftesbury (c.888), Romsey (c.907) and Nunnaminster, later St. Mary's Winchester (c.924).[2]

As well as offering inconsistent evidence about the foundation, the cartulary offers no insight into the most dramatic landmark in the abbey's history, its destruction by fire in the civil war in 1141, described in Chapter 4.1. Nevertheless, the thesis returns again and again to the effects of the fire, because so many questions hang over the status of the abbey, both before and after this catastrophic event. The fire may also account for the failure of any original documents to survive. However, it is possible that the abbey just did not have the resources and skills to maintain an efficient collection of charters. Literate chaplains or scribes, with a good command of Latin might have been too expensive, or too scarce, for a relatively small nunnery, like Wherwell, to support.[3] Most of the documents in the cartulary date from c.1220 to 1364, and it was in the 1360s that the cartulary was compiled. Only a few later

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1 William of Malmesbury, *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*, ed. W.Stubbs, RS 90, 188. M.A. Meyer, 'Women in tenth-century monastic reform,' in *RB* 82 (1977), 56.

2 The traditions surrounding the foundations of these houses, and the sources on which they are based are discussed in D. Coldicott, *Hampshire Nunneries* (Chichester, 1989) 1-19, and more fully in S.J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988).

3 S. Thompson, 'Why English Nunneries had no History', *Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women I*, ed. J.A. Nichols & L.T. Shank (Kalamazoo, 1984), 132-39.

documents were copied into the cartulary, and it seems that all that was left of Wherwell's archive was destroyed or dispersed at the dissolution. The cartulary itself was a part of this dispersal, but was kept by the new owners of Wherwell. Because of the lack of material in the cartulary, the later history of the abbey is barely discussed in this thesis, and the dissolution itself, not at all.[4]

The exact date of the foundation is uncertain, because the sources do not agree, but the widespread claim that Elfthryth was a murdress, who founded the monastery to expiate for her sins, is examined in detail. Conflicting stories about Elfthryth are only part of the problem of establishing the origins of the abbey. There is some uncertainty as to the exact nature of the early monastery, and what sort of religious establishment pre-dated Elfthryth's foundation.

If the nature of the early monastery was known, it might be easier to determine how the clerical responsibilities and remunerations developed and matured. The rights and apportionments of the clergy were jealously defended by generations of canons, chaplains and vicars, all of whom quoted age-old precedent, but these precedents are hard to verify and tie in with what we know about the development of the parish and the all-important prebendal system. These issues are considered in detail in Chapter 2.5 and 2.6.

With regard to the abbey's wealth, the earliest document laying out the extent of the foundation is the diploma of King Ethelred confirming his mother's original endowment; this dates from 1002. It shows that from the start, Wherwell Abbey was able to enjoy income from six principal adjoining manors in the vills bordering the

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[4] For the dissolution, see Coldicott (1989) 130-157; J. Hare, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries in Hampshire*, Hampshire Papers 16 (1999).

River Test: Wherwell itself, Middleton, Goodworth, Bullington and Tufton and Anne. Wherwell, Middleton and Goodworth all developed parish churches, which became prebendal to the abbey, and Bullington and Tufton had chapels (Part II, Fig.1). Additional property in Sussex and Winchester was obtained before the Conquest, and even more substantial additions were made sometime after, when the abbey acquired the manors and churches of Bathwick and Wooley in Somerset, Ashey with Langbridge on the Isle of Wight, and property in Cornwall. Donations of tithes in Wiltshire and Berkshire during the twelfth century increased the abbey's prosperity further. This is the subject of Chapter 3, which also explains how succeeding abbesses made small increases in their wealth by taking over local landholdings when they became available. These additions were almost certainly first facilitated through the energies and personality of a remarkable abbess, Matilda de Baillieul (?1174-1213), who originated in Flanders, and who, in all probability, did more than anyone else to restore the fortunes of the abbey after the mid-century fire. Her equally remarkable successor was her niece, Euphemia de Walliers (1213-1257). In all, they ruled Wherwell for a total of around eighty years.

Unfortunately, the documentation relating to the later abbesses does not equal that of Matilda and Euphemia. However, we know from indications of indebtedness, and complaints made at an Enquiry in 1347/8, that Wherwell's resources were becoming increasingly stretched, and that the abbey was particularly vulnerable to pressures during Edward III's wars with France. These issues are all developed in Chapter 3. It was during this period, probably just after the second outbreak of plague in 1361, that an order was made for the cartulary to be drawn up.

Chapter 4 pays closer attention to the background and fortunes of men and women associated with Wherwell, both within and without the cloister. It looks at the careers of the abbesses, and describes how some abbesses were well served by some able stewards and clergy. In this chapter, other sources are drawn upon, from the personal psalters of Abbess Matilda and Euphemia, to the Plea Rolls of the Justices of the Eyre, and of the Forest; these help record some of the goings on in the local vills, and identify the roles played by its principal inhabitants.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the extent of the struggle which the abbey had in defending its interests and wealth. Foremost amongst those who threatened its wealth were its own clergy, as can be seen from the account of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century tithe disputes, which could be lengthy, as in the case of Barton Stacey, and violent, as in the case of Inkpen. Accusations against a seriously inefficient and neglectful clergyman led to an unsuccessful attempt by the abbey to appropriate the local parish church in 1347. An especially important part of Chapter 5 is a section which highlights mounting opposition at Wherwell to the appointment of alien clergy in the thirteenth century. It is argued here that Wherwell's experiences might afford substance to the anti-papal rhetoric of Matthew Paris, a currently unfashionable historical view. Finally, an attempt has been made in this chapter to draw together the documents relating to the abbey's woodlands, demonstrating the extent to which successive kings sought to erode the long-held, but patently disputed, privileges enjoyed by private holders of forests.

The completion of this thesis does not mean the end of research into Wherwell Abbey. One interesting way forward is archaeology. Today, the site is dominated by

an eighteenth-century private house, Wherwell Priory, and on the face of it, all traces of the old abbey are gone; however, in 1998, Dr. Kate Clark of the Department of Archaeology at Southampton University and a team of students did an extensive resistivity survey of the whole site. They discovered the outlines of a substantial abbey church, cruciform in design, and around 70 metres long. It had a nave approximately 10 metres wide, increasing to 40 metres at the transepts (Part II, Fig.3).[5] Comparison with other abbeys shows that these measurements made it the fourth largest convent church in the land: Barking was 102 metres, Shaftesbury 76 metres, and Romsey between 70 and 78 metres.[6] Thus Wherwell was very similar in dimension to Romsey, and must surely have been comparable in visible grandeur. The close parallels also suggest that they were dated from around the same time. It can be seen from the study of the Romsey plan that the abbey's growth was a gradual affair, and one should assume the same with Wherwell. In its final phrase of glory, Wherwell carried an imposing spire. This can be seen in the top left hand corner of an oil painting of the sixteenth-century Abbess, Avelina Cowdrey (1518-1529) (Part II, Fig.4)[7]

Further investigation at Wherwell by the Southampton team has revealed the outlines of a complex of buildings, around three sides of a small courtyard, to the east

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[5] E. Roberts, 'The rediscovery of two major monastic buildings at Wherwell,' in *Hampshire Studies* (1998) *PHFC 53*. See too K.Clark, *Aspects of Wherwell Abbey*, Andover History and Archaeology Society Publication. This is the text of the Dacre Lecture given by Dr. Clark in March 1999 on the results of her research.

[6] R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture* (1994), 45. Gilchrist's figure for Romsey is 78 metres, whereas the illustrations given in D. Coldicott, *Hampshire Nunneries* (Chichester, 1989) 31, suggest it was slightly less.

[7] This painting is in the private collection of the Jervoise family of Herriard Park. See Chapt. 3.9. for a fuller discussion of funds available *ad fabricam ecclesie* in the 1250s.

of the abbey church.[8] The layout suggests that it might have been the abbesses' private lodgings, perhaps dating from the late fourteenth century. Just possibly it might have been the offices belonging to the abbey's infirmary, which was built by Abbess Euphemia in the thirteenth century.

There is exciting new evidence of the infirmary itself; it can be found in 'The Stables,' the only substantial medieval building standing today on the site at Wherwell. Until recently it was thought to be an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building, as it is faced with flint and brick banding characteristic of the era, but within the last few years Edward Roberts undertook an investigation on behalf of the Test Valley Archaeological Trust and the Hampshire County Council. He discovered that 'The Stables' conceals a magnificent timbered roof, typical of a hall of the raised aisle type of the mid-thirteenth century, just the sort of building which would serve as a substantial infirmary (Part II, Fig 5). Not only does this discovery bring the documentation to life, but it demonstrates that this hall can now be ranked as one of the earliest, if not the earliest surviving one of its type in the country. Thus although the abbey site was long ago stripped of its riches, it nevertheless still yields much of interest.

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[8] K. Clark & E. Roberts, 'Wherwell Abbey: the new evidence,' *Hampshire Studies 2000, PHFC 55*, 21-24.

CHAPTER 1 THE CARTULARY .

1.1. The book, its provenance and content

The Wherwell Cartulary is in the British Library, shelf mark BL Egerton 2104A. It contains two principal collections of documents, the main one contains 199 parchment leaves, whose foliation is indicated by post medieval Arabic numerals, inserted in ink in the top right hand corner of the *recto* folios. The folios measure 185mm x 285mm, the text generally filling 160mm x 240mm. The text is arranged in single columns with 38-40 lines, set 5mm apart. Clear examples of the ruling can be found on f.196 and ff.47,49,74,167,169. The second, smaller collection, ff.200-211, comprises the Sacrist Charters, and here the ruling style and the folio size is reduced.

The cartulary is the only known book belonging to the abbey that was kept at Wherwell by the new owner of the abbey, Thomas West, Baron de la Warr, and his descendants, following the dissolution. The rest of the books were either destroyed or scattered, a few luckily being bought up by collectors in later years. This is deduced from the fact that the cartulary was in the possession of the 5th. Baron de la Warr in 1669.[1] The entries on f.1 of the cartulary expand the provenance:

'Purchased by the British Museum from W. Cutter on October 29th 1869.

In the Excheq[uer]. Woodcock Esq. et al ag[ain]st Iremonger Esq.,

This parchment Book was produced and shown to Nathaniel Bradbury Esq., at the Time of his Exam[ination] in this Cause on the part of the Def[enden]t. Dated the 5th Day of Nov. 1762. [?] D. Barlow'.

The British Museum purchase speaks for itself, the second entry is made more comprehensible by the fact that in 1743 Wherwell became the property of Joshua Iremonger. When the abbey site and its manors was sold by the de la Warr family in 1695, it was bought by a London merchant, Edmond Boulter. His heir was his nephew, John Fryer, a Pewterer of London, who left the property to his three daughters in equal shares. One of these daughters, Delicia, married Joshua Iremonger, who bought out Delicia's sisters and thus took on the title of Lord of the manor. Joshua produced the cartulary as evidence of his title when it was challenged in 1762.

The cartulary comprises 16 quires, and has a strong wooden cover, overbound in vellum, which is probably late medieval. Strong binding cords are visible on the inside. The cover was not however, original, for there is evidence on f.2 that the manuscript was trimmed to fit. The boldly inscribed letter 'A' which is evident on the cover and at the top of both f.2 and f.3. marks it as exhibit 'A' in the 1762 hearing.

The numbers of the folios are in ink at the top right hand corner of each recto folio and are possibly from the eighteenth century. The contents of the present manuscript can be summarised as follows:

f.1r. Originally blank. Eighteenth-and nineteenth-century inscriptions, described above.

f.2. Settings of two polyphonic Marian antiphons, probably used as processionals.

Sancta Maria non est tibi similis

Sancta Maria virgo intercede.[2]

f.3r-12v. *Capitula* or Table of Contents.

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[1] Coldicott (1989), 190 for a list of surviving books, and 65-75 for her fuller discussion on books in

This constitutes a complete quire and probably dates from the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The *capitula* are numbered I - CCCCLXIII. This lists the contents of the cartulary, but with some errors and omissions.[3]

f.14r-14v. Three fifteenth-century form letters which have no marginal numbers and were added later onto a blank folio at the end of the Table of Contents.

A 1.cm. strip of parchment is all that is left of the original f.14.

f.15r.-199r. The principal documents of the cartulary collection, numbered I - CCCCLXIII.[4] f.15 was originally the first folio of the cartulary. f.199r. also contains one of several texts of the fifteenth century.

f.200r.-211v. The Sacrist's collection. The documents are numbered I-XXXII.

f.212r.-224 Miscellaneous collection of fourteenth and fifteenth-century unnumbered documents in various hands.

1.2. Compilation

The script of the main cartulary f.15r-199r. is in a mid-fourteenth-century cursive *anglicana* hand, suggesting that one man was primarily responsible for compiling the cartulary and that it was done within a comparatively short time (Part II, Fig. 6). There is no indication on any of the folios of who the compiler was, who had commissioned the task or the exact date during which it was done. The fact that it contains no transcriptions dated later than 1364 (with the exception of some fifteenth-century entries which were clearly written in different hands), suggests that the task was completed some time around 1365. This is borne out by the style of the principal scribe which has

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Hampshire nunneries. *Monasticon* II (1817), 635.

[2] Coldicott (1989), 70-1. No attempt has been made in this thesis to analyse the chants.

[3] See Part II.

several characteristic features. It is highly current and on the whole well spaced, with numerous abbreviations of which the most typical are the use of the crossed tironean *et*, numerous horizontal bar suspensions, and contracted endings with ambiguous superscript loopings. The capitals are simple and occasionally hatched, though on a few folios the scribe emphasises the capitals with special flourishes, as for example *Domina Euphemia* on f.45, *Eduardus Rex Anglie* on f.53v, the popes *Celestinus* and *Alexander* on f.23v, and most unexpectedly, the witnesses to Baldwin of Calne's quitclaim to the abbess on f.29v.(Part II, Fig 7). This folio is interesting in that the top and the bottom sections of the text are clearly written in another hand. The passage in the middle is a typical example of the main scribe's hand, which dominates the cartulary, but a bolder, more cumbersome upright hand, intrudes onto this page, giving these three documents an impression of being widely variant (**23-25**).

There are other examples of a second hand at work. In fact the very first important privileges which commence the cartulary on ff.15-18 (following the Table of Contents), are written in a completely different upright style to those of the majority of the folios, suggesting that a second scribe had started the cartulary at an earlier date. However, when the whole cartulary is taken into consideration, numerous other contributions by this same second scribe can be seen, as on f.89-90. He did not transcribe onto blank folios, left spare by the first scribe, for when the arrangement of the quires is examined, it becomes clear that the hand appears randomly, not at the beginning or end of the quires. For this reason, it seems likely that the second scribe worked alongside the main compiler. This is the impression gained by looking at the bottom of

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[4] Calendared versions of 296 of these, form the bulk of Part II, together with some of the Sacrist charters,

f.69v and top of f.151v. Again it looks as if the documents, in these cases **114** and 348, were written by the second scribe. In neither of these cases does it look as if the second scribe was filling in at a later date a part of a folio left vacant by the main compiler, but just took over the task for a short while.

The idea that two scribes worked alongside rather than writing in succession is borne out by looking at the style of the second scribe; in some respects it bears the characteristics of a later 'secretary' hand, which also has, for instance, the '2-shaped' **r.** which is used several times on f.15. [5] One distinctive characteristic of his hand is the style of his capitals; these have dotted elaborations as on f.29v, 89v-90, f.145, f.170, and can also be seen on the royal privilege f.15. If the two scribes were working alongside, as seems probable, they must have been schooled in different traditions. Once consideration is given to the characteristics of the *anglicana* hands of the fourteenth century, and allowance is made for the fact that the hands took time to develop into their pure form, it seems that Egerton 2104A does not provide a model example of either the *anglicana* or *secretary* hand, but is evidence of the different influences at work in the development of handwriting during the middle of the fourteenth century. Pure examples of style are probably rare.[6] The lack of fluency in the style of the second scribe suggests that the writer may have been a woman, perhaps one of the nuns.

When one moves from consideration of the style of hand to the contents of the documents themselves, one finds more confirmation that the second scribe worked in tandem with the first, for he or she not only wrote up the opening privileges, but also

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referred to below.

[5] See M.B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford, 1969), Pl. 4 ii, p.4. This hand was written between 1315 and 1352.

[6] *ibid* xiv - xx.

transcribed the final resolution of the William of Malmesbury case which commenced in 1345 and ended in 1363-4 (**324-330**). Similarly he also transcribed the account of a court hearing in the Michaelmas term of 1364 concerning the mill at West Bullington (463), but since the folio is in the middle of a quire it cannot have been part of an additional collection. There are no documents beyond 1364 in the main corpus of the cartulary, so this scribe was active when the transcription of the cartulary was being completed, even though the first folios are in his or her hand. The second scribe's active role in the 1360s is borne out by examination of f.145v.-146v where he or she is given a free hand in copying out the documents relating to the 1360s dispute between the Abbess and the King over the forest. The first two pages of the sacrist charters show a similar contrast. The familiar firm upright hand commences on f.200 with the first documents of the sacrist collection and continues overleaf until f.201, when the main scribe reasserts his dominance and finishes the collection himself. This precludes any idea that the Sacrist collection was put together at a later date. It seems then that the second scribe co-operated with the first throughout the compilation. Perhaps he or she had a special role in going to the public records to take copies of the documents for the Wherwell archives to round off the collection.

If the cartulary and Sacrist collection were written up by one scribe with an assistant, it seems that a third person whose style conformed more to the the later 'secretary' hand, made additional improvements. This is apparent in the list of *capitula* which comprises the table of contents f.4-f.13v. It seems that this work was done twenty or thirty years after the main work of the cartulary by a third scribe. A similar neat hand shows up on f.212-3 which must have been written in the 1390s or later

because it records a case brought before the king's justices at Westminster in 1393. The similarity of hand and the gap between the last documents of the 1360s and the record of this court case might have given an occasion for a resurgence of interest in the cartulary, and a spur to the making of the table of contents.

There remain several documents in the cartulary belonging to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These were apparently written by nine or ten different people. They vary from the neat hands of f.14 and 212-213v. and 217v.-218, dating from around 1430 and 1400 respectively, and the much more personalised and untidy hands of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (f.218v.-f.222), which are written in such a loose style they are scarcely decipherable. Two of these are written in English: f.220 and f.220v.

Although the great bulk of the material is in Latin, there are eleven items in French scattered throughout the cartulary, testifying to the growing bi-lingualism of the period: **68,69,71,72,143-4,161,223-4,331,353.** All are from the middle of the fourteenth century.

The issue of when and why the cartulary was created is not easy to resolve. As already noted, the main collection of documents in the Wherwell Cartulary are the 463 documents dating from the eleventh to the middle of the fourteenth century transcribed on folios 15r.-199r., with by far the greater majority being of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. In the absence of any clue as to why the work was undertaken, several guesses are perhaps allowable. The work could have been commissioned by a new head of

house as happened at Godstow, Bury St. Edmunds and Peterborough.[7] One would hope, naturally, that in this eventuality there would be some record left in the cartulary to record their efforts, as in the case of Chatteris, where an abbess and one of her vicars embarked on the project at their own expense.[8] However, there is no record of anything like this in the Wherwell cartulary. It could have been drawn up with more practical considerations in mind. There was a growing realisation that correct documentation was necessary to keep pace with the increase in litigation, and this went hand in hand with a fear that the documents were deteriorating. The records show that arguments had arisen as to the state of the muniments, as on one occasion the bishop had been asked to verify a document which was thought to have been tampered with (**S12**).

The exact dating is uncertain. It could have been started while Amicia Ladde was abbess (1340-1361), or in the time of her successors Constancia Wyntreshulle and Johanna Cokerell (1361-1375), with Johanna being the most likely patron.[9] A sense of history might have precipitated the decision to preserve the abbey's records. It is perhaps significant that Johanna's appointment followed the terrible second coming of the Black Death in the autumn of 1361 which carried off her two predecessors Amicia and Constancia within a few months of each other. The horror of the loss of life, the worry about changes in land ownership, and the sense of relief and wonder at the survival of those who remained could have stimulated the new abbess and her officers to create a book, recording for all time what they possessed and what they had achieved, so creating a pledge or monument to posterity.

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7 D. Walker, 'The organisation of material in medieval cartularies,' *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in honour of Kathleen Major* (Oxford, 1971), 146.

8 *Chatteris*, 107.

9 For a list of the Abbesses, see Part II, Fig.8.

The political ramifications following the black death also caused concern at the abbey. A rash of vacancies had occurred because of the deaths of Matilda de Littleton, Amicia Ladde and Constancia Wyntreshulle, creating tension between the abbey and the king regarding the abbey's rights. This certainly could have been a reason for them wanting to get their records straight at this time. Evidence of the confusion these vacancies caused can be found in [**A**] f.212. It is also apparent from the documents that the abbey was engaged in an important legal struggle with the king during the 1360s over the forest, which drove them to search their archives for evidence of their past and to substantiate their legal claims.[10] Possibly this searching and scrummaging was the cause of both frustration and of renewed interest in the past, and stimulated the drive to create an ordered archive, for study of the ordering of the documents in the cartulary indicates that the compiler had considerable difficulty in categorising the material coherently, suggesting that the muniment room was ill-organised.

1.3. Arrangement of the documents

The first priority was to establish an hierarchical pattern by setting out the abbey's main grants and privileges, thus **1**, which marks the beginning of a new quire and is on the first folio of the original collection, is the diploma of Ethelred confirming the abbey's original endowment by his mother, Queen Elfthryth. **2** contains the confirmations by Henry III in 1260 of the grants of his royal predecessors. Even at this early stage, however, the compiler failed to keep strictly to order. He numbered another charter of Henry III dated 1267 as number **10**. King John's important charter of 1207 has to wait till **182** and there is a repeat of this charter at **238**. One searches in vain, too, for the

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10 See Chapter 5.3.

logic behind the placing of a further charter of Henry III at **209.** This is a grant of assarts and purprestures. Not only is it far adrift from the principal royal grants at the beginning of the cartulary, but it is also nowhere near other documents relating to the forest. The forest documents are widely scattered. The tersely copied, yet probably forged grant of Queen Elfthryth of Harewood forest is stitched onto f.27v following **19**, meanwhile important documents relating to the forest dispute between the Abbess and Edward III are grouped together at **68-71,** although the discharge of the controversial woodward, John Farley, during this same period, is reserved for **331.** The documents which chronicle the origins of the abbey's woods, however, are satisfactorily grouped together, being **353-356.** These comprise a dubious fourteenth-century royal petition, an extract from Domesday Book, a perambulation record, and an extract from William of Malmesbury. In summary, it seems that with regard to the royal documents, the compiler only loosely succeeded in following an hierarchical pattern, suggesting that even the abbey's principal documents were rather ill organised within the original muniment collection, and the clerk failed to rectify this.

Further evidence that the establishing of an hierarchical pattern was the intention of the compiler, is suggested by his move to follow the royal grants with the papal privileges mentioned above. **3,** the privilege of Gregory IX of 1228, is the first of the papal confirmations to be presented, but if strict chronology for the privileges was being observed the order would be **8,3,7,5,9,4** and finally **6**. Instead, 9 is a 1256 privilege of Alexander IV, **6** is a privilege of Innocent IV dated 1245, **7** is one of Gregory IX dated 1236, and **8** comes from 1194, when Celestine III granted a mini-privilege to Abbess Matilda (?1175 - 1213). The final privilege to be included in the papal series is 4, which

is a confirmation of Alexander IV dated 1257. Further irregularity occurs because the compiler included another papal document in this section (**5**), which is not included in the table of contents: it is not a privilege at all, but records the settlement of a dispute between the Abbess of Wherwell and the cleric John Lettacorvus in 1256. The other document concerning this interesting dispute is placed out of sequence at **29** and is followed by a receipt from the papal tax collector Geoffrey Vezzano dated 1296. Another document from Vezzano is placed at **255**, this time within range of the documents relating to Collingbourne church to which his letter refers. Two other documents which originated in the papal chancery, one relating to John Lettacorvus and the other to the living of Collingbourne are **415-416**. The legate Ottobuono was responsible for **415** and also for another letter regarding the provision of benefices (**40**), the logic behind the placing of **40** is unclear as it follows a single document relating to a dispute between the Abbess and one of her canons in 1258 regarding his allowance of firewood (**39**). Another papal document included in isolation is the Indulgence of 1291 which is placed at **35,** and one of the most interesting of all, a letter from Pope Benedict XI ordering an investigation into the alienation of tithes, etc. is hidden at **294**. Thus, with regard to the papal documents, although all the papal privileges are at the beginning of the cartulary and preserve the hierarchical priorities of the compiler, there are several other papal documents inserted here and throughout the cartulary which represent a variety of other issues, in particular the settling of the Lettacorvus dispute, taxation, and the problems of Collingbourne. These are not grouped together either.

One might expect Episcopal confirmations and documents to succeed the papal ones, but this is not so. Instead, there follows a substantial series of donations relating to

a variety of places: (**11,13-21,24,25,28,**31**,34,37,41,**43,44**,46,48,50,**51**,53**), all but four of which (**25,28,**31 and **34**) belong to Abbess Euphemia's time (1213-1257); and none are later than 1281, the end of Mabel de Tichburne's reign (1262-1281). It seems that the concept of hierarchy quickly gave way to chronological ordering, or perhaps ordering by Abbess, for many of the documents from the first half of the thirteenth century are undated. Whatever the state of order or disorder of the archive, it would not have been difficult for a compiler to put Euphemia's documents in close proximity to one another, nevertheless, several strayed. **143** is a placed with its related deed (**142**) in the middle of a series of documents from the fourteenth century.

Some material received before Euphemia's death was related to Bullington: (371,372**,374,376,382,387,388,389,** 394**,396,398,** and 401), and was accordingly placed among later deeds relating to Bullington, indicating that the compiler sometimes gave more prominence to topographical rather than chronological considerations. The extent of the Bullington documentation made this an obvious preference, since the greatest number of documents in the cartulary concern Bullington and they might well have been bundled together in the muniment room. There are 110 Bullington charters in all. In terms of trying to see a logic to the groupings of the documents, the Bullington numbering shows that some limited grouping was successfully achieved. They are numbered**73,74,7677,86**90,**106,115,117,**119,**121,126,**129,134,**135,141,171,175,205,**213,216,218,220,227,239,252,253,256,**284,285,**300,332,348,362,6366,369-**403,**412,418, **419,**434, 444,448,450,458, and 463. But analysis of these numbers must take account of a lot of factors. A good proportion of these 'Bullington charters' might also be categorised as 'Wherwell charters' because of lands in both vills being cited in the same

document. Three examples of this, which are merely representative of the problem, are **135** which covers lands held by Roger Forester in Wherwell, Sutton Scotney and West Bullington; **137** which covers lands in both Wherwell and nearby Newton Stacey, and **141** which once more refers to Forester lands in Wherwell, Sutton Scotney and Bullington; thus a neat topographical arrangement could never be achieved, and was therefore not attempted.

It was easier to keep order with smaller groupings of documents such as those relating to the grants to the abbey by John son of Thomas son of Ralph grouped at **15-21**, and those relating to the two benefactors from the vill of Anne at **13** and **14,** for the very reason that they usually only referred to property in one vill. Similarly the lands in Forton which passed through the hands of the St. Valery family and Walter Erkebande to the abbey are numbered **25-28**. John had bought the lands from Walter Erkebande some years previously (**26-27**). These latter two documents probably came out of the St. Valery private archive and were placed in the Wherwell Abbey muniment room when the land was transferred. However, two much later documents from the 1340s relating to Walter Erkebande's lands are put at **288** and 289, suggesting that more priority was given to chronological sequence than to topography. No attempt was made, either, to keep all the Forton documents together, as there are other Forton charters at **34** and **45,** both placed in isolation, and at **38** there is an early charter, dated 1234, showing how the abbey came upon substantial property in Compton through an exchange with the abbey's mill at Forton. Finally, **65,** concerns some rents in Forton, and might have been put with the **25-28** sequence, as the property originated with Walter Erkebande, but instead it was perfectly logically put with documents reflecting charitable giving by various abbesses.

There is further evidence that even documents relating to small donations could go astray. For instance the three deeds relating to the Bristol properties were kept together at **46-48**, but a confirmation of the same gift was put at **178**. Similarly, two deeds concerning the land held by the knight Baldwin of Calne are separated, one being at **24** and the other at 31, even though Baldwin of Calne specially mentions handing over his *munimenta* to the abbey in **24**, implying that he had a coherent collection of documents. 31, however, is followed by a random announcement dating from as early as 1218 of a visitation by the Abbot of Glastonbury (**32**).

Neither chronology nor topography can explain the placing of some important fourteenth-century documents at **54-57,** f.41-f.43. These are among the most interesting documents in the cartulary, recording a series recording the results of an enquiry into the status of the abbey's canons in 1347/8. At the time of compilation in the 1360s, their expensively obtained consultations, which defined the clerical establishment of the Abbey, had the status of constitutional documents. Their importance is perhaps reflected by the fact that they are followed immediately by documents that are so fundamental, they should perhaps have been placed right at the beginning of the cartulary. Firstly there is an account of the foundation of the abbey by Queen Elfthryth, then four important *obits*, those of Abbesses Euphemia and Matilda de Bailleul, and bishop Nicholas of Ely;[11] finally comes Queen Elfthryth's *obit*. Thus **54-62** might be considered documents of core importance to the abbey, and of continuing relevance.

These are followed by another roughly chronological segment (**73-141**), where most documents are from the time of Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333). However,

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[11] Nicholas of Ely, bishop of Winchester (1268-1279).

142-3 return to Euphemia's time, and relate to an important grant of land in Cornwall, followed by five documents from Mabel de Tichbourne's time regarding Upton (**145-149**), and a fourteenth-century quittance (144). A good example of a neat collection of documents are those from Tufton (**150-156**), suggesting they might even have been tied together in the original collection. However with no particular reason, **157-9** go on to Southampton during Amicia Ladde's rule (1340-1361), although the other Southampton charters are **33,75,97** and **17.** The next document records a dispute entered into by Euphemia in 1246 (162), which is completely unrelated. Although there are exceptions, from **163** to **176**, the documents return to Isabella's long term of office, but between **176** and **183** there is much confusion. A will of a citizen of Winchester is placed at **176**, separated from the first Winchester document relating to the same man, which is at **164.** Other Winchester charters are 169,**180,**292-3, 408-9, and 420-437 . Meanwhile **179-181** relate to debts and other unrelated matters.

This attempt to break down the documents in the first half of the cartulary demonstrate the complexity of the compiler's task and the probable difficulty anyone had in finding the charters as they lay in a disorganised way in the abbey's muniment room. There are however, some important coherent groupings, not yet mentioned, such as the series of Episcopal confirmations from Salisbury and Winchester (**184-192,**212). The five earliest date from the time of Abbess Matilda de Bailleul (**184,185,190,** and **192**); the rest are from Euphemia's time. The compiler has placed them, not near the beginning of the cartulary, but near the documents which recount the tithe disputes arising from these confirmations. The fullest documentation covers the dispute with the rector of Inkpen in 1320 (**183b**), but the same case had already been laid out fully in **66-67**.

Meanwhile other tithe disputes covered are documents relating to Ashey, **193;** Wallop, 195 and Barton Stacey, 206**,266-280,** though one of the Barton Stacey documents is inserted inexplicably at **49**. These is also a recorded dispute at Hannington in 1304 (352); one at Compton (**12**); and one at Newchurch, on the Isle of Wight (**231-2**). **194** records an Inquiry into tithe holding within the diocese set up by Adam de Hale during an episcopal vacancy in 1281. **260-261** confirm a special pension granted by successive Bishops of Salisbury to the Abbey out of the church of Collingbourne. It should be noted then, that the problems of clerical entitlements was a constant source of controversy, and one might highlight the fact that they were widely scattered throughout the cartulary, being covered in documents **29,40,49,54-57,66-7,107-8,193-**5,206**-208,231-**2**,240,250,255,258,**262,264**,280,294,** 352**, 414-6,**446,457**.**

The documents discussed so far comprise roughly half the cartulary, and combine the complex considerations of topography, and chronology, as well as categorisation by donor. In the second half of the cartulary, the documents are almost all from the period of Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333), Matilda de Littleton (1333-1340), Amicia Ladde (1340-1361) and Johanna Cokerel (1361-1375). Although there are the odd intrusions from earlier times, this demonstrates that some chronological emphasis was being given to the lay out by the compiler. A great number of charters in this section relate to the principal acquisitions of the abbey during the fourteenth century. These acquisitions were so substantial, that licences of alienation were required by the donors. They can be regarded as the key documents to which the supporting charters relate. In deciding on the ordering of these groups, the compiler put the royal licence first, and then entered the earlier documents in chronological order, demonstrating the history of the

particular property. This, of course, had a justifiable logic of its own, and thus some of these documents are relatively well organised, especially those associated with the lengthy alienation in 1364 of property in Middleton, Wherwell and Newton Stacey, which was only achieved after going through the courts. The documents relating the alienation of Roger Forester's lands granted to Henry le Wayte (**73**) were also closely grouped, but accuracy in this case is hampered by the lack of topographical detail in some of the transactions. The ubiquitous *omnes terre et tenementa* must have been as hard for the compiler to unravel as for the twentieth-century student, and the Forester family and its land dealings were extremely complex and spread over several vills and several members of the family.

The truth must be that it was seldom easy to decide upon the ordering. With regard to the Middleton charters, for instance, there are some separate deeds which lie amongst the documents supporting the alienation licence granted to William *atte Mulle* of Middleton. These are numbered 320-322, and concern another deal between William and William le Blount of Snoddington. Ideally they should have been separate. However, it is clear that William *atte Mulle's* documents are grouped very firmly together; he was a leading freeman of the area, and conceivably the documents came from his own archive. Alternatively the orderliness is a tribute to William of Malmesbury, rector of the nearby Knight's Enham, who masterminded the alienation together with his fellow clerics, Wherwell's steward Richard Deneby and John Wake.

There is one more category of document, however, which has not yet been noted, namely, grants by the abbey of surrendered property to new tenants. There are 40 of these, out of which 18 stand entirely on their own, apparently unrelated to either location,

chronology or particular archive. These are **33,52,75,**95,**97,**98,101,**122, 125,164,**166,**205,**230,241,**257,281,288** and 291. An exception to this is **89,** a grant by Euphemia to Robert Sutton, and this does stand amongst some other Sutton and Bullington charters, rather in the way that 134 and **139** are amongst other Forester charters. Again, the assumption is that they formed a mini-archive within Wherwell's own muniment collection, perhaps being surrendered to the abbey when the lands eventually came into the abbey's possession. The Sutton family were an important family in the locality as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4.4.

In one or two instances if there is any organisation at all, they seem linked to documents related to a certain abbess, thus a collection of grants made by Isabella comes at numbers **164,**166-70,**172** and **174.** However **97,98,**101 and **122** are also grants by Isabella, so no point is conclusively proved.

It is not possible to cover every entry in the cartulary, but the picture emerges of the compiler unable to group the documents clearly; the probable reason for this is that the original documents were disorganised, some lying in bundles of related material; some roughly in chronological order; some scattered singly without other material. Whereas he and his assistant did succeed in giving priority to the important royal and papal privileges, and to the important acquisitions made during Euphemia's time, but they were slack about chronology, and it was all too easy to lose the sequence, even when the great bulk of dated fourteenth-century documents were drawn together for calendaring. Thus the Wherwell cartulary cannot be categorised as topographical, hierarchical, or chronological, rather, elements of all three principles seem to have been applied.

1.4. The Sacrist's charters

The thirty two Sacrist charters comprise a distinct collection within the Wherwell cartulary, as is clearly indicated by the heading *Sacrista ecclesie* on f.13 of the Table of Contents. The collection itself, which starts on f.200 has an explanatory heading:

> 'In the Name of God. Amen. Here begins certain copies of muniments touching the tithes belonging to the sacrist of Wherwell'.

The folios are smaller than those of the main collection, and they were inserted into a quire which started at f.198. **S2**, f.200v notes that an original *scriptum* of Godfrey de Lucy[12] was placed under the care of the sacrist 'to avoid destruction.' In all probability it was for security reasons that all the documents relating to the tithes belonging to the sacrist were put under his, or more probably, her, care. The sacristry, or vestry, typically adjoined the church, though by no means all nunneries had them.[13]

Any student of the cartulary quickly observes how important clerical entitlements were to the canons, vicars, and chaplains of Wherwell, and the tithes were an important part of the clergy entitlement. **S1,S3,S4-S7,S13,S19,S22-S25** all concern tithes and pensions. **S26** is a special document relating to the valuables kept by the sacrist, reinforcing the special regard with which the sacrist, as custodian of the abbey's valuables, was held. The dignity of the church of St. Cross was also the sacrist's

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[12] Bishop of Winchester 1189-1205.

responsibility, thus a document concerning the right of merchants to trade their merchandise within the church of St. Cross necessitated correspondence with the archdeacon (**S21**). The maintenance of the fabric was also the particular concern of the sacrist, therefore several papal indulgences are within this collection (S8-S10 and **S31**).

Deeds concerning several important gifts which had been made in free alms to the church were also kept by the sacrist, for example **S14,S17** and **S18.** Sometimes the reciprocal grants were recorded and kept by the sacrist as in S15,S16,**S20**,S27,**S28.** The fact that the sacrist surrendered her documents to the scrutiny of the compiler of the abbey's cartulary - for as has already been noted, one scribe transcribed at least 90% of the documents in the two collections - is evidence of a communally acknowledged effort, which might have been the occasion for considerable interest and pride of everyone in the community.

1.5. Use and usage

Speculation on who created the cartulary, when, and for what purpose, can be further advanced by looking for rubrics and marginal entries in the cartulary. The first search is for rubrics, or directional headings, made by the compiler of the cartulary, which might be intended to assist the reader of the volume. The compiler of the Chatteris cartulary employed just such a method, putting a heading at the top of each folio.[14] This aid was not provided at Wherwell, making it extremely difficult to follow. The main scribe did not insert any headings into the cartulary, instead he let the whole series of documents run one after the other, with little to mark out the subject other than the occasional accentuated capital. The second scribe, however, whose bold upright

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[13] Gilchrist (1994), 109.

style has been described above, although giving the impression of being more untidy, did in fact give some guidance, sometimes writing in headings for the documents he transcribes. These can be seen in the royal confirmations, **1,** ff.15-17, and the papal ones which follow on folios 17-18v. There can be no doubt that the intention was to draw the eye to these important documents, and the *rotae* copied from the papal documents stand out very clearly. The professionalism of the whole is perhaps diminished by the mess on f.18v-19 where the main scribe takes over copying the privilege of Alexander IV **(4),** forcing the second scribe to delete his opening of the charter of Henry III. Perhaps this muddle prompted the second scribe to continue with the headings until f.20.

Although rubrics are scarce in the Wherwell cartulary, the marginal notations are numerous. One series of annotations is pictorial, and was probably done by the principal scribe. Thus on f.26v there is a drawing of a crown in the bottom margin in which is clearly written *ville et moniales.* A similar pictorial image of a crown can be found at the bottom of f.39v. where the words read *de Wherwell et monialibus.* On f.51v. there is *teno vero commissionis.* In fact at the bottom of every 12 folios there are two or three words and it becomes clear that they constitute the first words of the folio following (f.51v.,63v.,75v.,87v.,99v.,111v.,125v.,135v.,147v.,159v.,173v.,197v.) These markings therefore indicate the end of one quire and the beginning of the next. As the binding of the cartulary was not done to till a later date, this clear marking of the quires must have been invaluable for giving the cartulary some order.

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[14] *Chatteris* (1999), 115.

Simpler, less pictorial annotations are used for making note of the place names, and by and large these seem to be fourteenth century. Whether the original scribe put them in for guidance, or not, is unclear. They may have been put in by some of the abbey's administrators at a later date. For instance on f.45v, a marginal note draws attention to the proceedings between the abbess and the rector of Inkpen (**66**). The scribe has put *Inkep'* in the margin and enclosed it in a tasteful design, adding his own heading announcing the hearing before William de Selton.

Another place which attracted the attention of someone was the Isle of Wight. A rubric on f.74v. and 75r. marks three charters concerning the affairs of William de Lisle in the first half of the fourteenth century (**126-128**) with *de Insula*. However, although the Lisles were a notable family, these markings were not thorough, and another document concerning William goes unnoticed (**343,**f.150). A charter relating to Ashey on the island, however, is marked simply *Asshey* in a contemporary hand (**231-2,**f.114v.), but there is nothing to mark the other Ashey documents **80,192,193,235,** 237,241, excepting 439-442, which are annotated in English by a writer with a much later scrawling hand whose numerous markings will be described below.

Another place whose name is highlighted in the margin is Cornwall, *Cornubia* (**281,**f.128v.), but the two earlier documents concerning Cornwall (**142-3**) escape notice. The documents relating to Upton are also marked by the word *Upton* in the margin, as can be seen from f.81v-82. The documents were almost certainly from Abbess Euphemia's time, a century before the cartulary was drawn up, and there is no evidence that the Upton property caused any particular problems in the fourteenth century, so it is interesting that these two documents (**145-146**) receive so much attention. It might

indicate a personal or antiquarian interest by someone at a later date. The other charter concerning Upton (**11**,f.24) is unmarked. The charters concerning Forton also attracted someone's careful attention (**Fig.7**), the dating again being uncertain.

Somebody has put in markers pointing out issues of particular concern to the abbey; on f.71 he draws attention to a final concord reached between Gilbert Thorn and Ralph Viselu in 1315 (**117**). This is of more obvious concern than an entry on f.73v which says simply *dampnat.* This document (**125**) is an old one dating from the 1230s. Perhaps there were occasions when old matters of discord were revived and the abbey's administrators needed to clarify things. An important letter of quittance granted to Abbess Mabel, dating from the third quarter of the thirteenth century concerning an annual payment of 100s. (**160,**f.87v.) was marked up in the fourteenth century. Similarly, a marginal note explains that the acquisition of the mill and lands in Middleton has finally been secured (125v.). This was in the court case of October 1363, which followed protracted transactions.

The acknowledgement of the importance of Amicia Ladde's recovery of some property in Southampton in 1348 is also comprehensible, as it too was likely to have been of contemporary concern. This is marked *Placita ville Southampton* (f.86). The case is interesting because of the customary legal proceedings described in full in this document, and the recovery of the tenement was of considerable value to the abbey (**158**). In general, though, there seems to be no obvious logic as to which kind of documents is favoured with a marginal note. One of the charters granted by King John to the abbey (f.116) is favoured in rather a minimalist manner, but not the other (f.94). One might think that the main scribe made a clear decision to highlight some of the Episcopal

confirmations, writing the names of the bishops in the margins of the cartulary, as can be seen on f.96 (**184-185**), but he does not continue the practice on the succeeding folios which also contain episcopal privileges.

Nearly every contemporary, or near-contemporary marginal entry has been accounted for in the above and it must be said that it is hard to see any logic behind the choice of documents singled out. Some classes of documents which one might expect to be put together or to be highlighted are not, such as the Final Concords.[15] These are scattered in small groupings throughout the cartulary, being numbers **115,117,323,326,**377,378,404,406 and **407.** The evidence for the cartulary being used as a practical administrative tool from the start is not strong.

Unfortunately there are two series of smaller abbreviated markings which are suggestive of the fourteenth century, but whose meanings are obscure. Perhaps they should more properly be called *signa.*[16] The first are cursive abbreviations resembling either *cum* or *ai* with superscript bars, and the second is an *a* set within a fluent figure of eight. There are 49 of examples of the first form of notation: **27,29,30,32,35,39,**42,**47,48,50,7277,81,97,**119,**121,125,**129,140,**142,149,152,155,158,16 0,163,**166,**167,**173,**174,176,190,191,**224,227,**231,273, 281,297,298,304,324,344,360** and **413.** Obviously it is not practical to discuss each entry, but a short consideration of the last six documents demonstrates the difficulty in understanding the meaning of this marking. **413** is a record of Euphemia's grant of a pittance to the monastery following a purchase of land in *Eston.* Other documents which record similar grants such as **63** and

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15 Walker (1971), 135.

16 M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London, 1993) 142-3. Ralf de Diceto was a pioneer of this convention.

65 are unmarked. **360** records a gift made by John Fryans to Peter Forester. Again it is easy to find other charters recording gifts to the Foresters which are not highlighted in this way, such as **361, 363** and 359. **344** is an exchange between Peter of Sutton and Henry le Wayte. Henry le Wayte's land dealings on the part of the abbey were numerous, as will be discussed later, yet it is hard to see why this is especially noted rather than, say, 333 or 337. 324 is a *Writ praecipe* issued to the sheriff of Southampton regarding the case between John *atte Parke*, William of Malmesbury and John Deneby concerning the Middleton properties. This marked just one of the many steps in the procedure undertaken by the abbey to secure this property, yet **301-308**, and **327-329** also concern this case. Of these, only **304** shares the distinction of **324** by having a marginal marking in the cartulary. These examples are sufficient to show that with regard to the first cursive notation mark, the significance of the documents cannot have been that they were part of a particularly notable series. Perhaps instead, they referred to some concern of the compiler to record how, where, when or why the original document was kept.[17]

A similar mystery surrounds the documents marked with the *a* within the figure of eight. These are 52,**72,73,74,80,85,**91,**93-96,**98,**357,369,370,373,**378,**380,382,386,389,** 390,394,395,**397,**403,410,418,420,428,430,433,436,437,439,444,447,448,450,453,456, 461, **S6,**S7,**S10,S11,** and **S31.** The majority of the documents are clustered towards the end of the cartulary, but if one picks out a random selection from this collection one is none the wiser: **389** marks the gift of land made by John Iuvenis to the abbey; 390 is a twelfth-century charter between Robert Pagan and Simon, a chaplain of Wherwell; 394

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[17] *ibid,* 127.

marks a gift of a plot of land to the abbey by John *de la Mare*, again during Euphemia's time; 395, a charter of John *de la Forde* granting land to his daughter, Agnes; and **397** records a gift of Alan Long to the abbey. The idea that *a* might have stood for 'addition' or some such suggestion, as after all **389,** 394, and **397** are all gifts to the abbey, does not take into account that many other gifts were not marked and that many documents which were so marked are not gifts. Again, perhaps these markings represented some guide to the storage or source of the documents used. Alternatively they might mark the progress or cost of the compilation in a way that we cannot follow. They seem unlikely to be marks inserted at various times by later administrators.

The pointed finger is a device frequently seen in medieval documents. The documents in the cartulary which have these markings are **55-58,66,115,117,**168,295 and 349. Examination of these finger markings shows immediately that they were not all done at the same time, and not by the same people. These documents were indeed singled out for special attention after the cartulary was compiled. **55-58** are the documents concerning the rights and entitlements of the prebendaries and vicars. It is perhaps surprising that the very important series of documents in which this image is inserted, namely the inquisition into the origin of the canons and their entitlements, is not more clearly marked in the folios of the cartulary. A glance at the table of contents on f.3v. shows that it, at least, aroused intense interest, being highlighted with numerous crosses, pointing fingers and underlinings, suggesting repeated scrutiny by successive canons, perhaps over several generations. No such assistance is given in the long unpunctuated account of the proceedings in the main cartulary, though some of the text has been heavily underlined as on f.41v. The canons, of course, also had responsibilities

with regard to the abbey's temporal possessions and had easy access to the muniments, and presumably to the cartulary itself, once it had been completed.

Of the remaining finger markings, **115** and **117** are both records of the Final Concord between Richard le Wayte and Walter Turry, and the someone may be drawing attention to the fact that **117** is a copy of **115.** The finger in the margin of 168 looks completely different, and it has a mini eye alongside it. It concerns a bond of £40 and it is dated 1353. Conceivably this finger marks a later acknowledgement that the case was closed or that it posed later problems. **295** f.134 has yet a different sort of marginal finger, this time with a conspicuous drooping cuff; it highlights an important document, namely the grant in letters patent, of Edward III to Abbess Isabella de Wyntreshulle, that on her death or cession the prioress and convent shall have custody of the temporalities. Perhaps the finger pointing at the king's mandate ordering the restoration of temporalites to the abbey in 1361 on the occasion of the accession of Johanna Cokerel which is on f.151 (349), was noted by the same man, since the anxiety regarding the custody of the temporalities was particularly acute at this time; nevertheless, other documents which mark restorations on other occasions are not so marked. It may be that the fingers were inserted by abbesses or their staff at the end of the fourteenth century or even the fifteenth century, as the issue of custody of the temporalities became the prime cause for concern in that later period, as will be discussed below.[18]

All in all these finger pointers seem to indicate that the cartulary was searched over a period of years for clarification over a number of issues concerning the abbey, but the inconsistency of the markings suggest that these searches were not always successful.

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[18] A full list of the documents which are relevant to this issue are on **78,** n.1.

Later in the thesis is will be pointed out that the abbess and her staff became confused in their efforts to marshall evidence to their rights during the latter part of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; bearing in mind the lack of clarity in the compilation, this is perhaps not suprising. It either led to serious errors in their evidence, or they freely concocted their own. We know from the bishop's registers that as early as Bishop Woodlock's time (1305-16), the Latin language was in decline in religious houses, and by the sixteenth century 'utter ignorance' of Latin was acknowledged.[19] Although this could account for some of the slack interpretations of the Wherwell documents, it seems unlikely that this criticism over the poor Latin could be applied to those that really mattered: the abbesses themselves, and their canons and stewards. Furthermore, the fact that a Table of Contents was drawn up at the end of the fourteenth-century, suggests that efforts were being made to make the source easier to use.

Having said that, there are indications that the cartulary was to some extent disrespected. This is demonstrated by its use as a sort of exercise book to write out the fifteenth-century form letters on f.14, and it is undeniable that very few documents were transcribed into the cartulary after its compilation, which suggests that if there was an impetus to efficiency, it was neither recognised nor maintained.

The cartulary did, however, attract the interest of later generations. Some time in the sixteenth century an enthusiastic Englishman set about adding his own marginalia, at top, bottom and side of a large number of folios. His abbreviations bear some resemblance to those on f.220 which date from that era, but his style was much more slanting. Examples can be found on ff.17v,18.v,19v,-25v,26v,28,29r,31v,32,

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[19] Coldicott (1989), 70.

36v,37r,38r,39r,42r,190v,205v,207,210v, and 211. The style is extremely untidy and difficult to read, but the headings tend to be simple: *pope's grant*; *grant to the abbess*; *from the king*, and such like. He particularly noted grants made to the abbey. It seems likely that he started the task of deciphering the cartulary with enthusiasm but gave up around f.42, though for some reason he took a great interest in the documents on ff.205v-207, which are in the sacrist collection. But why should he have chosen to highlight **S14**, in which Henry le Wayte makes a grant to his nephew, Nicholas and an agreement between Abbess Isabella and the Rector of Barton (**S19**); a charter of Abbess Euphemia to John *de Ingepenne* (**S20**), and another of Euphemia's to William of Souththorpe **(S29),** and finally a charter of concerning property of the Clare family (**S30**)? Surely no administrative purpose can have been served by this research. The conclusion must be therefore, that he was something of an antiquarian enthusiast who took pleasure in trying to unravel some of the documentation of a religious house with which he clearly had some association.

One man, who was both of an antiquarian streak of mind and the abbey's receiver in the 1490s, was William Palmer; he tried to work out the amount of land the abbey had in hand during Euphemia's day (f.222), and in his own day (f.220v). We will see later that he failed to leave any clear conclusions, but one feels he enjoyed making the effort. Like many of the later contributors to the cartulary, his writing is scarcely decipherable.

In conclusion, the cartulary was probably conceived at a time when the abbey was under strain in the middle of the fourteenth century. The marginal entries demonstrate that the compilers of the cartulary used some sort of system to mark the arrangement, source and content of the documents, but unfortunately it is not easy to fathom. In spite

of their efforts the documents were not transcribed in a transparently systematic way, perhaps owing to the disorder in which the original muniment room was kept. Furthermore, for all their efforts, the lack of clear rubrics, paragraphs or punctuation, meant that it must have been a difficult administrative tool to use.

These problems were off-set by the creation of the Table of Contents, whose worn folios demonstrate generations of use, if not by administrators, then by antiquarian enthusiasts. Clearly a few persistent, anxious or curious canons from various eras took an intense interest in the exposition of their entitlements, and marked the *capitula* with those timeless crosses.[20] A few scanned the book over the years for information about certain specific localities, but the greatest number of those were probably antiquarians and historians. Other folios of the main text are pristine in their neatness and lack of markings, suggesting that they were barely ever read.

It is possible, however, that the cartulary was never really intended to be an efficient administrative tool, but rather it was conceived, and remains, primarily a memorial to a once great abbey, more mystical than practical, bearing out Clanchy's conclusions that many medieval collections were, above all else, historical monuments constructed as pledges to posterity.[21] This point seems to be proved by the experiences of Sir Joshua Iremonger in 1762. Sensing the historical significance of the cartulary, he ordered a new Table of Contents to be drawn up which survives as BL Egerton 2104B.[22] Iremonger, undaunted by the failed efforts of his scribe to complete the task, offered the cartulary as evidence of his title to lands in Forton and Harewood. But when the local

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[20] See the editorial notes preceding the transcription of the Table of Contents in Part II for details of the individual markings.

[21] Clanchy (1993) 146-9.

witnesses were asked to 'look at the parchment book now produced', and were asked 'whether the same was ever esteemed or preserved amongst other title deeds as part of the evidence of the title to any and what estate, and where and how was the said book kept', and then told to declare what they knew, heard or believed 'touching the said manuscript book', they were, to a man, silent. Their depositions were based not on the cartulary evidence, but on what they had seen and heard from old men of the village, and from what had always been known from time immemorial.[23]

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[22] This suggestion is speculative. However, Egerton 2104B is written in a hand of the mid to late 18th. century, when the cartulary was in Iremonger's hands.

[23] PRO: E134 3Geo3/Mich3 f.4.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS, FOUNDATION & DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABBEY

2.1. The evidence of the cartulary.

It has already been noted that Wherwell Abbey was a Benedictine nunnery, associated with the Wessex royal family, and that its foundress was almost certainly Queen Elfthryth, wife of King Edgar (959-974). There are four documents in the cartulary which support this theory:

1, a confirmation charter, granted by Elfthryth's son King Ethelred (979-1013)

58, the *Chronicon fundatricis Elstrudis quomodo fundavit abbatiam.*

62, a brief obituary of Queen Elfthryth.

356, an extract from William of Malmesbury's *De gestis regum Anglorum.*

However, the cartulary also contains a document which apparently contradicts Elfthryth's role in the foundation: this is **353,** which has been widely read as declaring that the founder was a brother of Elfthryth, called Alfred.[1] To add to this confusing theory, a further claim was put forward by Cicily Lavyngtone, Abbess of Wherwell (1375-1412): she presented Richard II with a charter for confirmation which claimed that the abbey's founder was Alfred the Great, 'sometime king of the English'. This charter, possibly drawn up earlier in the fourteenth century, was solemnly confirmed by Richard and his successors.[2] Thus within the cartulary itself there are three candidates for the founder: Queen Elfthryth, her brother Alfred, and Alfred the Great.

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1 For instance, Coldicott (1989), 18.

2 *CPR 1377-81, 266.* An *Inspeximus* of Henry VII, dated 1489, was presented for sale at Sotheby's in December 1997 perpetuating the same fiction.

The Alfred the Great theory is untenable. There is no evidence in any other source which suggests that a nunnery existed at Wherwell in Alfred's time, let alone that he was the founder. The very fact that the theory gained any ground at all reveals much about the nuns and their advisors of the late fourteenth century; either they had completely lost touch with, and had no interest in, their own history, and innocently grasped at a fabulous theory to boost their sense of importance, or they did indeed know about their origins, but they deliberately tried to outwit the king by presenting him with an opportunist and fraudulent charter. One thing can be fairly certain, and that is that the legend took root sometime in the second half of the fourteenth century. This is an ironic fact, considering their new cartulary was supposed to strengthen their archive and their legitimate claims.

Accuracy was a constant problem, however. Difficulties associated with the copying, reading and translating of texts is apparent when the following *memorandum* regarding the foundation attached to f.27v., is examined. Headed by the word *Copia*, it continues:

Ego Alfrida do boscum meum de Wherwell Harewode dictum deo gratia....

Alfrida gives Harewood to the Abbess and the nuns of the Holy Cross, Wherwell, free from all servile obligations. Does the writer mean Elfthryth or Alfred ? Perhaps the most interesting feature of this little *memorandum* are the witnesses. *Ethelredo filio meo, Petro de Fontibus* and *Almerico,* the steward. Surely *Ethelredus* was Queen Elfthryth's son, Ethelred the Unready. However, these witnesses, and indeed the opening words, are identical to those cited in the *Inspeximus* of 1378, which attribute

the foundation to King Alfred;[3] this suggests that somebody assumed that *Alfrida* was identical with a masculine *Alfredus*, rather than Elfthryth. Yet on f.27v the *a* at the end of *Alfrida* is absolutely clear, indicating a feminine *Alfrida*. This suggests that the document on 27v. was either an extremely skimpy and inaccurate copy of an existing document, or an effort by the abbey in the 1360s to concoct a charter of Elfthryth - spelt *Alfreda* - to back up their undocumented claims to the woodland. The Alfred the Great myth might have arisen 20 years later, when again under pressure, someone mistook *Alfreda* for *Alfredus*. This does assume, however, extraordinary ignorance.

Misreading of the contemporary **353** f.152v might also have contributed to the confusion. In this Norman-French petition concerning Harewood Forest, the word *Alfred* stands out clearly. A suggestable and ignorant abbess, or one of her staff, might plausibly have pounced on this as being Alfred, the famous king. Presenting him as the donor of the Harewood Forest, currently under dispute with Edward III, would have been guaranteed to impress the king.[4] However, this would imply that the document was not properly read. The same conclusion must be drawn from the theory that the founder of Wherwell abbey was a brother of Elfthryth, called Alfred, for it goes on to say that *Alfred* was *fil Osgar comte de Devenesschir* - apparently Alfred, son of Osgar, *comte* [Ealdorman] of Devon. But this is a red herring, too. The only known brother of Elfthryth was called Ordulf.[5] Grammatically, too, the interpretation is untenable. On the second last line of the same folio *Alfred* is given feminine prepositions, thus we have *de la dite Alfred.* The Alfred of **353** was really

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3 *CPR 1377-81*, 266.

Alfreda, not *Alfredus*, though the scribe might have struggled to find the correct endings for a French rendering of the name. The abbreviated or curtailed endings were surely the root cause of the confusion, for *Alfreda* was just another scribe's way of spelling Elfthryth, who, though not the daughter of *Osgar*, Ealdorman of Devonshire, was the daughter of *Ordgar*, Ealdorman of Devonshire. The differences between *Osgar* and *Ordgar* are slight, giving rise to predictable misreading.

Spelling variations were commonplace. Elfthryth's name was spelt in various ways, the most deviant being *Elstrudis* (**58**), *Elstrita* or even *Wylstrida.*[6] *Elstrita* also shows up on a mortuary roll of the early twelfth century[7] and William of Malmesbury calls her *Elfthrida*, daughter of Ordgar. The differences between these versions are reduced if the *s* of *Elstrita* is replaced with an *f*, and the capital *E* is replaced with an *A*, creating *Alftrita.* In the light of this tendency to vary the spellings, the mistakes seem more plausible, but at the same time **353** cannot be considered as a sound basis for claiming that a brother of Elfthryth founded Wherwell Abbey because of the hitherto overlooked feminine pronouns.

It seems that scribal inconsistencies have led to considerable confusion, misleading abbesses, royal servants and the even the king himself, not to mention modern editors. Other misread names pertaining to Wherwell are *Mestowe* Hundred of Domesday - perhaps a misreading of Westover; *Storunella* of a charter of 1105 -

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[4] See Chapter 4.5. for a full account of this dispute.

[5] H.P.R. Finberg, 'The house of Ordgar' *EHR* 58, 190-193.

[6] D. Knowles & C.N.L.Brooke, *Heads of Religious Houses in England & Wales, 940-1216* (Cambridge, 1972), 222. *Liber Monasterii de Hyda* ed. E. Edwards, RS 45 (London, 1866), 189.

[7] *Rouleaux des morts du IX et XV siecle,* ed. L. DeLisle (Paris, 1866), 188. It is not clear whether the abbess cited here, *Aelstrita*, was the foundress Elfthryth or Edward the Confessor's half sister, who was known to have been Abbess of Wherwell and who might well have inherited her grandmother's name. See P. Stafford, 'Cherchez la femme' *History* 85 (2000), 18.

which might be a misreading of *Werewelle* itself if the *St* was a miscopying of the *W* of Wherwell;[8] *Everhanger* Copse instead of Easthanger; and *Stavanger* Copse instead of Stonehanger.[9]

In spite of the textual problems in the Wherwell cartulary, confirming Elfthryth's status as foundress of Wherwell Abbey is easier than confirming the date of the foundation, about which there has never been a consensus. One suggested date is 986, the date when other records show that Elfthryth withdrew from court.[10] Within the cartulary, **353** specifically states that *Alfred'* founded the abbey in 962, but there are obvious doubts about the reliability of this fourteenth-century petition as a pointer to the abbey's origins. Coldicott has argued that this earlier date should be given serious consideration, but her analysis is based on the faulty reading of **353** as described above. She does, however, draw attention to another controversial issue: the alleged romantic escapades of Edgar's youth. One of these escapades forms the basis for the first and earliest of three stories which will be discussed below; the second story is the one about the murder of Elfthryth's first husband, Athelwold; and the third story concerns the murder of Edward the Martyr. Each story presupposes a different foundation date.

2.2. Three conflicting stories

There is nothing in the cartulary concerning Edgar's supposed romances, but the origins of Wherwell cannot be considered without reference to them. According to Goscelin of Canterbury, writing at the end of the eleventh century, Edgar wanted to

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[8] *Regista Regum Anglo-Normanorum* II, ed. H.A. Cronne & R.H.C.Davis (London, 1968), 41.

[9] *CPR 1232-1247,* 452 and various other documents and calendared documents pertaining to the forest. The woods are just to the west of Goodworth Clatford, see map Part II, Fig.1.

seduce a beautiful girl called Wulfhilda, who was being brought up amongst the nuns at Wilton; her aunt was the ambitious Wenfleda of Wherwell, who, wishing to have one of her family raised to 'the pinnacle of the kingdom,' actively encouraged the liaison with the king. Wulfhilda rejected Edgar's advances, but such was Wenfleda's ambition and Edgar's obsession with Wulfhilda, that together they tricked Wulfhilda into coming to Wherwell. The pretext was that Wenfleda was on her death bed and wanted to leave Wulfhilda her property there. When Wulfhilda arrived at Wherwell she found Edgar and Wenfleda feasting together. The shocked Wulfhilda, desperate to escape Edgar's attentions, fled into the village, from where she returned as fast as she could to Wilton.[11] The details of the attempted seduction and escape are of far less importance than the fact that Wenfleda has been presumed to be an Abbess of Wherwell, and this would presuppose that someone had founded the abbey well before Edgar's marriage to Elfthryth, casting her role as foundress in doubt. Can this assumption be verified ?

Again and again historians repeat the assertion that Wenfleda was an abbess, but the source quoted is invariably Goscelin's *Vita Wulfhilde.*[12] However, in Goscelin's text Wenfleda was not given the title of abbess at all, rather Wulfhilda is described only as visiting *illustrissimam eius amitam nomine Wenfledam,* and Wulfhilda as being her *dilectem neptem.* Furthermore, nowhere in Goscelin's text is Wherwell described as a monastery, unlike Barking and Wilton. Goscelin merely

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[10] For instance: *Monasticon II,* 634. Coldicott (1989), 17-18, though Coldicott questions the 986 dating.

[11] *Vie Vulfhilde*, 14-15.

[12] *Life of Edward the Confessor,* ed. F. Barlow (Nelson Medieval Texts, 1962), 137.

says that Wenfleda had a property (*possessio*) there, and he calls Wherwell itself a *villa,* presumably a village.

According to Goscelin, the prime motive for Wenfleda's invitation to Wulfhilde was to encourage the liason between Wulfhilda and Edgar, so that the family would be brought into the Wessex royal house. Her trick was to tempt Wenfleda by pretending to offer her her house at Wherwell. This has been taken as evidence of an abbess exercising proprietorial rights over monastic property, and presupposes that Wherwell was a monastery at this early date.[13] It is true that the exercise of proprietorial rights was one of the great issues which prompted the reform movement instigated by Edgar, for the *Regularis Concordia* expressly included a passage forbidding not just monks, but abbesses too, from giving estates to their kinsmen or important secular persons, neither for money nor flattery.[14] But if there were abbesses who behaved like that, they need not necessarily have presided at Wherwell at that time, and as already noted, Goscelin's text raises real doubts as to whether Wenfleda actually was an abbess.

Confusion is caused because there were two distinct models of female vocation in Anglo-Saxon England. On the one hand there were girls who were dedicated to the religious life at an early age, perhaps like Wulfhilda herself, most of whom later became nuns, and lived by the rule; and on the other hand there were

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B. Yorke, 'Sisters under the skin,' Reading Medieval Series XV (1989), 101; B.S.Millinger, 'Humility and Power: Anglo-Saxon Nuns in Anglo-Norman Hagiography,' *Distant Echoes,* ed. J.A. Nichols & L.T. Shank (Kalamazoo, 1984), 129.

[13] D.H. Farmer, 'The progress of the monastic revival,' *Tenth Century Studies* ed. D. Parsons (London & Chichester, 1975), 14-17.

[14] Meyer, *RB* 82 (1997), 53-4. Meyer notes that this attitude was widespread, Dunstan regarding Glastonbury as 'his,' just as Oswald saw Worcester. See too, M.A.Meyer, 'Patronage of the West Saxon Royal Nunneries,' *RB* 91 (1981), 343-45.

older women, either widows or discarded wives, who took vows of chastity, lived in seclusion, but retained their personal property and much of their secular life-style.[15] The Wenfleda of Goscelin's story was probably just such a woman. It was Goscelin's intention to draw her in an unflattering light, and to contrast her with the saintly, Wulfhilda, who so emphatically rejects her aunt's promises of worldly riches, and who represented the reformists' ideal.

By coincidence, there definitely was a *testatrix* called Wenfleda, who apparently lived in a religious house, and had vast properties to give away, rather as Goscelin describes.[16] She is thought to have been the mother of Elfgifu, wife of King Edmund (939-946),[17] however, the picture of the lifestyle of this Wenfleda offers real plausibility to Goscelin's text. It demonstrates that a sheltered, semi-religious house might have existed at Wherwell 950-60, with an aristocratic widow, or discarded wife, vowed to chastity, at its head. This was not however, a real monastery. Furthermore, the lack of any documents which actually mention the existence of a nunnery or monastery at Wherwell at this early date, reinforce the idea that even if a Wenfleda was living at Wherwell as a religious, she certainly did not live by the rule.[18] Wherwell Abbey was not founded before 960.

Much more plausible is the story that Wherwell was founded following the murder of Elfthryth's first husband, Athelwold, in 962. This is also the date given in the fourteenth-century French petition discussed above (**353**). An account of Athelwold's murder is given in **356,** which represents William of Malmesbury's

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15 Yorke (1989), 101.

16 *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), 11-15.

17 See comments in *Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey:* Anglo Saxon Charters V, ed. S.E. Kelly (Oxford, 1996), 56. Meyer, *RB* 91 (1981), 339.

version of the story. It accuses King Edgar of the murder, because he had been thwarted by Athelwold in his desire to take Elfthryth as his bride.[19] Several years before Athelwold had allegedly been sent by the king to see if the rumours of Elfthryth's beauty were true, but instead of reporting honestly to the king, Athelwold told him that she was plain and unattractive, thereby ending the king's plans of marriage. Athelwold then took the lovely Elfthryth as his own bride. The discovery by the king of Athelwold's treachery - particularly painful as the two were foster-brothers - led to his downfall and murder. William of Malmesbury makes Elfthryth share some of the blame because she betrayed her husband by showing the king the extent of Athelwold's trickery: *sed quid non presumit femina?*[20] Only by making the big gesture of building a monastery at Wherwell could she expiate for this monstrous crime.[21] By implication this was shortly after her marriage to Edgar around 962, and would appear to add credibility to the same date of 962 given in the text of **353**, the only point to emphasise here being that Elfthryth founded the abbey, not an imagined brother.

There are, however, various problems with this story. Gaimar, although following the main story in great detail, gives a completely different version of Athelwold's death; he claims that Edgar, when hearing of Athelwold's treachery, sent

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[18] For more discussion on what consititues a monastery etc. see below.

[19] *Gesta Regum* .ii.157.

[20] *Liber Monasterii de Hyda* 189, has *quid non audet femina.*

[21] Until the advent of Elfthryth's modern day apologists, this was the standard story. In 1825 William Iremonger of Wherwell erected a monument in Harewode Forest to mark this event. It reads as follows: *About the year of our Lord 963 upon this spot beyond the time of memory called Deadman's Plack, tradition reports that Edgar, surnamed the peaceable, King of England, in the ardour of youth, love and indignation, slew with own hand the treacherous and ungrateful favourite the Earl Athelwold, owner of this forest, in resentment of the Earl's having basely betrayed and perfidiously married his intended bride, the beauteous Elfrida, daughter of Ordgar, Earl of Devonshire, afterwards wife of King*

him north to York to adminster the lands north of the Humber, and there he was killed by felons.[22] Credibility is further stretched by the fact that other sources claim that it was Elfthryth's part in the murder of her step-son, Edward the Martyr in 978 which led to her act of penitence, not to that of the murder of her first husband. This is the third story which must be considered as the basis for dating the foundation of Wherwell Abbey.

It is spelt out uncompromisingly in **58** which says that Edward came on a goodwill visit to his step-mother and brother and the queen welcomed him with a kiss and caused him to be stabbed by one of the guards as he was taking a drink. The account blames Elfthryth for tricking Edward, scheming in favour of her own son, Ethelred, and finally of being party to Edward's murder. **62** comes squarely to the same conclusion: Elfthryth founded the church of Wherwell on account of her part in the wounding of her step-son, Edward, and the shedding of his blood. Edward's murder occurred in 978. Thus in **356,** Elfthryth is accused of leading her first husband to his death in 962, and in **58** and **62**, of murdering her step-son in 978. The sources only agree in their determination to say that she was a ruthless and even wicked woman who stopped at nothing to further her own interests, and that she was indeed the foundress of Wherwell Abbey.

Any attempt to balance the merits of the different stories must go hand in hand with consideration of other evidence, and with trying to identify and date of the principal sources which apportion blame for Edward's murder, and to understanding

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Edgar, and by him mother of King Ethelred II. Queen Elfrida, after Edgar's death, murdered her eldest son, King Edward the Martyr, and founded the Nunnery of Wor-well.

the agendas of those who wrote them. Not all of them implicate Elfthryth as **58** and **62** do. It would be particularly rewarding, therefore, if the anonymous source of **58** could be traced.

2.3. Tracing the Wherwell sources.

The story of Elfthryth's culpability has been analysed many times and this is not the place to rehearse the various theories in detail, but it is worth drawing attention to a few things regarding **58,** *Chronicon fundatricis Elstrudis,* especially as there has been no previous effort made to identify the source of the text. It has already been noted that Wherwell took a copy of the *Gesta Regum* (**356**) to record the Athelwold murder, but the text of **58** is definitely not William of Malmesbury's text, so it is unlikely to have been copied at the same time as **356**. The two documents are also far apart in the cartulary, suggesting that the originals were stored in different places in the muniment room. Where, then, did **58** come from, what is the date of the text, and when was it transcribed and brought to Wherwell?

It can with certainty be said to have been Anglo-Norman, rather than Anglo-Saxon in origin; this is because the Anglo-Saxon versions of the story do not vilify Elfthryth as **58** does. The first writers to blacken her were Osbern and Goscelin of Canterbury, shortly after the conquest. Ignoring the earlier writers' claims that it was over zealous supporters of the young Ethelred who were to blame,[23] Osbern sets the

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[22] *L'Estoire*, 3840-3855. A vivid translation can be found in Gaimar, *Lestoire des Engles,* Vol.2, ed. T. Duffus Hardy, RS 91, 118-129. For Athelwold's responsibilities in the Danelaw, see C. Hart, *The Danelaw* (1991), ff.585

[23] 'Vita S. Oswaldi' in *Historians of the Church of York & its Archbishops,* ed. J. Raine, RS 71, (1879-94), 449; *Sermo lupi ad Anglos,* ed. D. Whitelock (London, 1963), Further reading on the divisions caused by Edgar's death is suggested by Ridyard (1988), 44-5.

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tone by describing Elfthryth as the 'ignominious mother of Ethelred.'[24] By the time Osbern wrote his *vita*, he was serving as precentor at Canterbury under Lanfranc; a century had separated him from the actual events of which he wrote, and this century had brought with it the perceived calamitous rule of Ethelred, the subjugation of England by the Danes, the numerous problems of Ethelred's successors, and the final humiliation of the Norman conquest. These disasters had been predicted. The immorality of Edgar and Elfthryth, whose union had resulted in the birth of Ethelred, had caused Archbishop Dunstan to prophesy that nothing but ill would come upon the royal house. Now these prophecies had come true. Here then, was an opportunity for the Canterbury chroniclers to promote the moral and spiritual authority of their archbishops. Getting this message across was their priority. Even Goscelin's lives of St. Edith and Wulfhilda, which emphasise so strongly the sanctity of his subjects, thrown into focus by the lecherous behaviour of Edgar, have at their core the elevation of St. Dunstan as a channel for divine justice. Goscelin, Osbern and the other chroniclers of this era all recorded the perceived wickedness of Edgar and Elfthryth with some relish, as it threw the moral into sharper persepective. The point is not lost in Wherwell cartulary's document **58,** which takes pains to include a passage about the two great church leaders, for without the sanction of Dunstan and Ethelwold, Wherwell's foundation and future would be considered insecure.

The success of the Canterbury school in promoting the authority of their archbishops is demonstrated by the way that Gaimar, who had a lay patron, followed the same line. It might only be added that he concentrated especially on Elfthryth's

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[24] 'Vita sancti Dunstani auctore Osberno,' *Memorials of St. Dunstan,* ed. W.Stubbs, RS 63 (1874).

act of penitance, writing warmly of her last years; he says that in his day, the nuns at Wherwell celebrated masses, and sang matins, services and prayers in her honour: he is the only chronicler to mention this. As his patron had lands in Hampshire, it is quite possible that he had visited Wherwell himself, which makes his comments particularly interesting.[25]

What of the content William of Malmesbury's texts, and **356** ? He clearly enjoyed repeating the legends and gossip regarding Edgar's philanderings, admitting that he spiced his stories to give them popular appeal and to provide a lurid deterrent to womanizers of his own and every age.[26] He also highlighted the importance of Elfthryth's act of penance in founding the abbey. Royal penance was a particularly relevant subject for William as he wrote his chronicle around 1125, shortly after the disastrous sinking of the White Ship in which Henry I's only legitimate son was drowned. In the face of tragedies such as these, which were surely the result of God's displeasure, chroniclers could guide the king into performing similar acts of piety, by demonstrating the examples of his royal predecessor.[27]

The original text of **58,** then, though not William's, surely had origins in this era. Whole sections were written with Wherwell in mind, such as that announcing Elfthryth's death. The date given is 17 November 1002.[28] The final one describes

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[25] Ralph Fitz Gilbert and his wife Constance. See *L'Estoire*, x.

[26] J. Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), 211-2. There will be more discussion on the agendas of Goscelin and William of Malmesbury below.

[27] Henry, shortly after this, founded Reading Abbey, see Stafford (2000), 4. Comparison might be made with other calendars, see F. Wormald ed. *English Kalendars before 1100* (HBS. Vol. LXXII (1934), and *English Benedictine Kalendars after AD 1100,* HBS Vol. LXXVII (1939), and (1946).

[28] S. Keynes, *Diplomas of Ethelred the Unready* (Cambridge, 1980), 210 suggests 1000 or 1001. He arrives at his conclusion by studying the many witness lists.

the foundation of the abbey by Elfthryth, and notes that both Dunstan and Ethelwold blessed the project.

An important phrase in **58**, says that Edward delegated much of the daily affairs of the country to Ethelred and his mother.[29] This perhaps has political interest, but the probable intention of the chronicler was to emphasise the unworldliness of Edward and his natural sanctity, rather than providing information on the king's style of government, or his relationship with his half-brother. Another phrase which indicates that the original purpose of the text was to elevate Edward is the inclusion of Elfthryth's highly symbolic betrayal of him with a kiss, linking the young king with Christ himself.

It is in the telling of the murder of Edward that the clearest parallels are found with other chronicles. The account in **58** follows word for word the text of the *Flores Historiarum* of Matthew Paris,[30] which in itself is identical to Matthew's *Chronica Majora,*[31] albeit that large sections of Matthew's texts were left out when the Wherwell version was transcribed. For instance, Edward's attempted escape by horse, told most gruesomely by William of Malmesbury and Matthew Paris, is omitted. **58** goes straight on to Edward's interment at Wareham. The miracles which ensued at the martyr's tomb are referred to but not dwelt on in the Wherwell text, instead, it goes on to recount the story of the stubborness of Elfthryth's horse, a classic passage, but nevertheless in this instance the words are special to Wherwell. **58** cuts the story short and says nothing about Edward's translation to Shaftesbury,

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29 *ille vero...Regis solommodo nomen sibi retinens, Ethelredo fratri et matri eius Regni negocia ordinare permisit.*

30 *Flores Historiarum I,* ed. Luard, RS 95 (1890), 515-7.

31 *Chron. Maj. I* (469-470)

concentrating only on Elfthryth's acknowledgment of her guilt, her penitent sojourn at Wherwell and her founding of the church of the Holy Cross. The fact that **58** shares so much text with the chronicles of Matthew Paris, means that it is highly likely that the text of **58** had its origins in St. Alban's Abbey. Perhaps a Wherwell scribe copied sections of these texts for the abbey sometime in the middle of the thirteenth century, omitting some of the longer passages about what happened to Edward's body after his death, and to putting in additional passages specially relevant to the foundation of the abbey.

It is possible, however, that Wherwell had access to sources at St. Alban's at a much earlier date. There are certainly grounds for thinking that Matthew Paris did not write the pre-conquest parts of his chronicles himself, but drew on the work of his predecessors at St. Alban's. He clearly owed much to his fellow monk, Roger of Wendover d.1236, who wrote his own *Flores Historiarum.* In many instances the texts of the *Chronica Majora* and Roger's *Flores* are identical. It is not suprising, therefore, that passages from **58** can be found within Roger's *Flores* too,[32] and as Roger preceded Matthew Paris at St. Albans, it is possible that the source of the text was the work of him rather than Matthew Paris. However, even this cannot be said conclusively, because Roger of Wendover took quite large chunks of text from a manuscript which no longer exists, but which must have been in the library at St. Albans for a generation or more before he started compiling his *Flores.*[33] These conclusions are based on the analysis of several surviving manuscripts of both the

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32 *Roger de Wendover Chronica sive Fores Historiarum I,* ed. H.O. Cox (London, 1841) 419.
33 R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge, 1958), 22-29, 92-97.

Chronica Majora and Roger of Wendover's *Flores.*[34] Ironically it is often the incidence of common errors in the texts which has enabled scholars to trace the sources to their origins. Vaughan believes that there were in fact two earlier manuscripts, both no longer in existence. The first was an early exemplar of the *Flores* done by Roger himself, which was the blueprint for the later surviving manuscripts, and was used by Matthew Paris for his *Chronica.* However, in addition to this, both Roger and Matthew Paris had access to an even older original *Flores* which had been compiled at St. Albans a generation before.

The likelihood of there being an earlier *Flores* in the library of St. Albans was suggested over a century ago by Luard.[35] He thought that Abbot John de Cella (1195-1214) may have been responsible, as he was instrumental in reviewing and updating the manuscripts in the St. Albans library in the first decades of the thirteenth century. Luard makes reference to the 'large number of documents' created for various monastic institutions using St. Albans sources at this time. Alternatively, Abbot Warin (1183-1195) might have supervised the compiling of a chronicle. A considerable amount of hagiography was produced at St. Albans during the last quarter of the twelfth century, and it has already been noted that the St. Albans accounts of the murder of Edward are slanted towards the sanctification of Edward. This slant remains undisguised within texts relevant to Wherwell.

It is not easy to reach a conclusion about which text was used to compile Wherwell's document **58** by studying the text alone, for on that evidence it seems the

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[34] The relevant texts of the *Chronica Majora* are Corpus Christi, Cambridge MSS 26 & 16; of Matthew Paris's *Flores,* Manchester, Chetham Library MS 6712; and Roger of Wendover's *Flores* in two manuscripts Corpus Christi, Cambridge MS 264 and Oxford Bodleian Library, Douce MS 207.

[35] *Chron.Maj.I*, xxxi-xxxiii.

scribe could have used either the original lost *Flores* identified by Vaughan, Roger's first draft, Roger's later *Flores*, or any of Matthew of Paris's two principal chronicles, which were by now being widely copied. It is only when Wherwell's special association with St. Albans is considered, that an intriguing possiblility emerges, namely that the scribe used the original lost *Flores* for his prime text rather than its thirteenth-century successors.

It is conceivable that the arrival of the document that formed the basis for **58** occurred during the beginning of Abbess Matilda's time as abbess in the 1170s. The reason for this suggestion is that Abbess Matilda and her family had strong bonds with St. Albans. They possessed a Psalter drawn up in the abbey's magnificent *scriptorium*: Cambridge, St. John's College, MS 68. This book had apparently been specially commissioned by someone close to Matilda, as it contained the names of numerous members of her family from St. Omer in Flanders.[36] The illustrations in this psalter have been acknowledged as the work of Master Simon of St. Albans, who died in 1183. The importance of Abbess Matilda will be explored fully in Chapter 4.1, but the crucial point here is that examination of the Wherwell sources suggest that the abbey had been in serious decline for many years when Matilda arrived in the 1170s and that the fortunes of the abbey dramatically changed under her leadership; the quality of the psalter which the new abbess brought with her to Wherwell, surely powerfully underlined her sacred mission to restore the abbey. Moreover, if her family had the wealth, position and influence to commission such a major work as this, it seems highly likely that the St. Alban's contact would have been exploited to

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[36] R.M. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey* (Tasmania, 1982), 37, 56-60.

retrieve for the abbey an historical identity, such as it could find in the scattered historical sources at St. Alban's. Sections of **58,** therefore, might not just be a mid thirteenth-century copy of either the *Flores* or the *Chronica Majora,* but one of the earliest copies of the lost source from which so many histories were later taken. In summary, as the association between Wherwell and St. Alban's was so strong, the original document from which **58** was copied was possibly drawn by a well-wisher of Abbess Matilda, from hagiographical or historical sources existing at St. Alban's in the last decades of the twelfth century.

Now that all these issues have been considered, how can the question of which of the three conflicting stories about the foundation of Wherwell abbey be resolved ? The agendas of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers described above lead one to doubt the truth of the story of the murder of Edward by Elfthryth. The story concerning Athelwold therefore, seems the most probable, even if the details became embroidered in the telling. This would mark the foundation to around 962, the date given in **353**.

Elfthryth's reputation has only recently recovered from the slurs of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers. If the two twelfth-century Wherwell calendars are to be believed, her *obit* was not even celebrated even in her own abbey. One might think that she was entirely forgotten but for an entry in another surviving psalter from Wherwell, belonging to the fifteenth century; here at least is an entry that credits Ethelred and his mother with the founding of Wherwell Abbey.[37]

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[37] MS McClean 45: '*Iste dominus Ethelredus rex fundator. Et Alfritha, regina fundatrix, huius monasteri de Wherwell.*' see M.R. James, *McClean Collection of Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge, 1912), 89.

2.4. Early Wherwell

The theory that there was a monastery at Wherwell prior to 960 has proven not to be tenable. What, then, did exist at Wherwell prior to Elfthryth's arrival ?

Wessex was dotted with numerous royal estates which had been built up by the West Saxons from the time of their first arrival, the importance of the old Romano-British *pagus* having given way to a new style royal administrative centre sometime in the eighth century.[38] According to recent research, at the centre of each *regio* was the *villa regalis* which had a church, probably a 'minster' church, at its heart. Usually they were built in prime positions on river-bank sites, a contrast to the ancient tradition whereby hill-top sites were favoured. Crucially, the *minster* churches and their *parochia* were invariably synonomous with the later hundreds.[39] In every respect Wherwell would be an ideal site for this sort of centre, though its existance cannot be proved.

The will of King Eadred (946-50) shows that Wherwell was indeed in royal hands, for he left it, together with Andover and Kingsclere, to the New Minster at Winchester.[40] The will was never implemented, probably being overturned by his nephew, Eadwig (955-59), who succeeded him, and was impatient to reward his own men with lands, such as Wherwell. Eadwig's actions in distributing lands to his supporters which rightly belonged to the church is not disputed; it provoked

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[38] B. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1995), 185. F. Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066* (London, 1979), 169.

[39] The evolution of the Hundred of Wherwell will be discussed below. The status of the early minster churches is covered in J. Blair, *Minsters and Parish Churches* (Oxford, 1988), and in 'Ecclesiastical organisation and pastoral care in Anglo Saxon England,' *Early Modern Europe 1-4*, (1992-5). See too, P.H. Hase, 'The development of the parish in Hampshire,' Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge (1975), 39; W.Page, 'Some remarks on the Churches of the Domesday Survey,' *Archaelogica* 66 (1914-15), and J. Blair, 'Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book,' *Domesday Book: a Reassessment*, ed. P. Sawyer (London, 1985).

Dunstan's criticism, and was the reason why Dunstan was banished.[41] It is probable that the New Minster kept the will in the hope that its claim to Wherwell might one day be recognised, but it never was. Instead, as part of Eadwig's tumultuous redistributive actions, Wherwell probably either passed to Eadwig's brother, the later King Edgar (959-975), who was on friendly terms with the famous Wenfleda, and might have favoured her with the possession of the estate, or to Athelwold, son of Athelstan-half-king, both of whom married Elfthryth, making her a natural successor to these estates. A further interesting point about Eadred's will is that he bequeathed £30 each to the nuns' minsters of Nunnaminster, Wilton and Shaftesbury. Wherwell was not included in this category, suggesting that there were no nuns at Wherwell.

So the question of what existed at Wherwell must be returned to. The possibility that a vowess, such as Wenfleda, lived at Wherwell, has already been demonstrated, but no consideration has been given to what sort community of priests, if any, existed nearby to give protection. Without this protection Wenfleda and her companions would have been extremely vulnerable, and would have had no easy access to the sacraments.[42] Perhaps they lived in the shadows of an old minster church.

The widespread lack of archaeological evidence of minster churches suggests that they were timber buildings, and this was probably the case at Wherwell. This brings Elfthryth's obituary sharply into focus, for it says she built an *ecclesia* there in honour of the Holy Cross (**62**). In it Dunstan and Ethelwold instituted *sanctimoniales*

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[40] *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, ASC IX, ed. S. Miller (Oxford, 2001), 76-81.
[41] *ibid.* See too, Hart (1992), 582-3.

(**58**); Ethelred increased the *ecclesia* with various extra possessions, giving it a firm endowment.[43] These extracts imply that not only a new church building, but also a freshly endowed community of nuns was established on the Benedictine model. However, it is notable that when Ethelred confirmed his mother's foundation he used the word *coenobium* rather than *ecclesia* (**1**), nevertheless, he entrusted the care of the *religiosa congregatio* to an *abbatissa*. The evolution in language makes for difficulties because the early minsters were also called *monasteria*, perhaps because they were served by communites of priests, often living communally.[44] The use of words continues to tease.

In the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, the 1051 entry notes that Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, was 'brought to Wherwell and committed to the abbess.'[45] The Domesday Book uses the words *abbatia*, and records a *villa in qua ecclesia sedet* (**354**). The word *monasterium* is not used until later. Thus William of Malmesbury acknowledged that Elfthryth founded the church of the Holy Cross, but adds also that she built a *monasterium* inhabited by *sanctemoniales* (**356**). Another source, probably of St. Albans origin, says that Elfthryth constructed a *monasterium monacharum in Warewella.*[46]

It seems that the word *coenobium* was used in a similar way to *monasterium*, or even *domus*, and was indicative of a religious institution of sorts, but of a kind hard

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[42] Yorke (1989), 110.

[43] *Quam ecclesiam postmodum Rex Ethelredus dicte Regine filius ....variis possessionibus ampliauit.*

[44] J.M.A. Pitt, 'Wiltshire minster *parochiae* & West Saxon Ecclesiastical organisation,' Ph.D thesis, Southampton University (1999), 2.

[45] *AS.Chron.*, 120-1.

[46] 'Annales de Wintonia' in *AM* 2..

to define.[47] Perhaps the prefix *nobile* is of significance in the case of Wherwell, intending to stress the aristocratic status of the inmates, but William of Malmesbury shows no such distinction in his *Gesta Pontificum*; here he simply says that in Wiltshire there were several *coenobia*: 'Malmesbury for men, and Wilton and Amesbury for women.' As for the word *ecclesia*, it is thought it could mean not just a church, but a community as well.[48]

If the language used to describe the religious houses as buildings and communities is hard to define, all the more so the language used to describe those who lived and served God there. Foot considers the word *moniales*, or *sanctemoniales*, and suggests that it is derived from the same source as *mynecena*, a cloistered woman with a status similar to a monk. The application of this term to the women in the community at Wherwell implies the presence of veiled women, whose lives were governed by the rule of St. Benedict.[49] Ethelred's grant to the *sanctemoniales* of Wherwell of lands in Ethelindene to pay for their food and clothing suggests that they really had repudiated the world and their personal possessions (1).

It just remains to be asked whether Elfthryth founded a religious house on reformist lines from the beginning, or whether her new community started as a simple retreat for herself and a few chosen noble companions, living much as the shadowy Wenfleda had done, and was only transformed by her son after she died into something much more in line with the reformers' ambitions.

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47 C.A. Jones, 'Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the old English Guthlaca,' in *Medieval Studies* 57 (1995).
48 S. Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon minsters: a review of terminology,' in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair (1992), 221.
49 S. Foot, *Veiled Women, I: The disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot, 2000), 96-104.

There is certainly evidence to suggest that Elfthryth treated Wherwell as her personal estate: *quod ipsa dum vixit possedit et jugi extruere aggressa est diligentia,* 'while she lived she possessed it, and bound herself to build it up diligently and energetically' (1); this hints at the retention of proprietorial interests and recalls the controversial Wenfleda, but the key phrase in 1 does not exclude the possibility that her vigour was directed as much at establishing a reformed house as a personal estate. It is particularly difficult to judge Elfthryth's role because she was unique in being both natural guardian of the honour of her dynasty and guardian of the spiritual well-being of all religious houses for women. Her intervention at Barking, when she ordered Abbess Wulfhilda to leave, illustrates just how difficult it is to interpret her actions. On a more prosaic level, it is unlikely that any reformist plan could be turned into an immediate reality; the building of the *ecclesia* must have taken several years, and there would have been setbacks and problems.

The suggestion that Wherwell was a child of the reform movement has its sceptics, who claim that real evidence that any of the nunneries were involved in the movement is scarce, Nunnaminster and Romsey being exceptions.[50] But the nearness of Wherwell to these Hampshire nunneries favours the existence of a common plan, and consideration should be given to Wilton, where a nunnery was established around the same time. The most recent research suggests that this, too, was a minster church and that it became absorbed into a nunnery in the tenth century

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[50] *ibid* 92-95. The Nunnaminster evidence she quotes is from Wulfstan, *Vita S. Ethelwoldi,* ed. Lapidge & Winterbottom. See too, Coldicott (1989), 13.

as part of a deliberate reformist plan, demonstrating the real physical vigour of that movement, whose intention was to sweep away the past and start afresh.[51]

There is no doubt that Elfthryth was at the heart of one of the most influential monastic reform movements ever launched in England. This was primarily the work of King Edgar and Ethelwold, whom Edgar appointed as Bishop of Winchester in 963, with a special mandate to promote monasticism. From the *Regularis Concordia,* we know that Elfthryth obeyed the call of her husband to oversee the Wessex nunneries.[52] When this is remembered, it seems improbable that she would have founded a house at Wherwell which ignored the tenets of this movement. Sharing of ideals might be expected between Edgar and Elfthryth, for not only did they have a joint concern in the wider monastic scene, but they also had a joint mission to expiate their guilt over the circumstances of their scandalous union.

Wherwell's proximity to Ethelwold's seat of Winchester is also significant. There is evidence that Elfthryth was very close to Ethelwold, and remained so until his death in 984.[53] Ethelwold, for instance, supported Elftryth in her bid to win the throne for Ethelred after Edgar died in 975, in opposition to Dunstan, who backed the young Edward. **58** is at pains to comment on the blessing given by Ethelwold to the establishment of *sanctemoniales* at Wherwell.

It may be that the house was constantly evolving and giving way to different political and personal pressures, as Wherwell remained so closely associated with the

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51 Pitt (1999).
52 *EHD I,* 848.
53 Keynes (1980), 166, 176-7.

royal house, and was subject to continuing dynastic pressures.[54] Were the religious women who were Elfthryth's companions of the same status as Haenflead's *moniales*, and were they, in turn, different from *les nuneins* who Gaimar tells us were singing masses in Elfthryth's honour around the time of the conquest?[55] According to Wulfstan there were clear distinctions between nuns and *moniales*. He said that *moniales* lived by the rule, but nuns definitely did not, the latter being closer in status to secular vowesses.[56]

The most potent symbol of the new Wherwell was its *ecclesia*, dedicated to the Holy Cross. Its presence provides proof of the extent of the religious commitment of the new community and their dedication to a life of prayer. It also suggests that Elfthryth's prime aim was the establishment of a Benedictine abbey. This church was primarily the conventual church, serving the nuns, but was it also, as successor to the old minster, a mother church? What remained of this old structure? Who took care of the pastoral care of the surrounding *vills* ? Who ministered to the nuns and looked after their temporal affairs? The same questions were asked at an enquiry in 1347/8, the results of which were painstakingly entered in the cartulary in the 1360s. This is the evidence which will now be considered.

2.5. The 1347/8 enquiry and the early canons

There are four documents relating to this enquiry, which occurred because the abbey had applied to suppress the prebend of Wherwell and appropriate it for itself: **54,55,56** and **57.** At this enquiry the nuns were asked not only about the status,

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54 See below Chapter 4.1. for the continuing role of Wherwell as a shelter for royal women.
55 *L'estoire*, 130.
56 Foot (2000), 97-99.

responsibilities and income of their canons, but also about their origins. This is what they said:

> 'there are four canons who assist the nuns and help them in their business affairs'; 'nothing is in their muniments except what is written in the custumaries....according to custom observed in earlier times.' (**54**). 'From its foundation the monastery was endowed with 300 marks of silver in land, incomes and possessions for the sustenance of 40 nuns.' 'At the time of the foundation, four canons and prebends were established to manage the temporal affairs of the monastery and give peace of mind to the nuns.'(**55**)

Clearly the Wherwell nuns believed that the canons had been established at the time of the foundation of the monastery, in other words in the tenth century. Does this fit in with the picture already built up of Elfthryth's *nobile coenobium*? Later sources suggest that the structure of the community at Wherwell was probably similar to that at Shaftesbury, Amesbury, Wilton, Romsey and St. Mary's, Winchester, constituting a Wessex model of religious house for women, which was distinctly different from the earlier Anglo-Saxon double-house. This supports the theory indicated above, that some remodelling of the women's religious houses took place in the tenth century, bringing them in line with the ideals of the reformers led by Bishop Ethelwold (963-984) and King Edgar.[57] During a 1318 enquiry into the prebend of Fontmell, which belonged to Shaftesbury Abbey, the answers fielded by the abbess and her representative about the composition of the prebend were almost identical to those at Wherwell in 1347/8. Like the Wherwell community, they had no idea when the

pattern had been established, they could say only that these prebends had existed from time out of mind.[58] Similarly, in 1304, when John Drokensford sought to take possession of the the church of Compton in Berkshire, which was annexed to Wherwell's prebend of Goodworth, he had to face an enquiry about its precise status, whether it was a prebendal church or an *ecclesia curata.* Bishop Simon of Ghent had great difficulty in deciding. The question of origin, he was told, was lost in the mist of time.[59] There was equal confusion about the status of Chalke, which belonged to Wilton Abbey.[60]

Bearing this in mind, the detail in the Wherwell documents should, in theory, provide valuable evidence of the way not only Wherwell, but other religious houses for women were set up at this time. Five alternatives should be considered: first, that there was an overall plan right from the start, not just to provide a closed house for women, but to incorporate some of the parochial responsibilities of the old minster church, to be undertaken by canons; secondly that it was only in Ethelred's time that the full pattern was established; thirdly, that although a monastery, dominated by noble women, existed throughout the eleventh century, they were served by secular chaplains, not canons, and the canons and prebends were a product of post-Conquest reorganisation; fourthly, that Wherwell was a relative backwater even then, and that the chaplains continued to serve in the old manner for a century or

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[57] Ridyard (1998) 107-8; on 141 n.5, she notes several passages in Goscelin's *Vita Edithe* which suggest this interpretation.

[58] *Reg. Mart.*, 98-9, 319-22 etc.

[59] *Reg. Gand.I*, 635. Also xlvii-l.

[60] A full account of these enquiries together with an effort to spell out the responsibilities and residential duties of prebendries belonging to these churches can be found in *Reg. Gand. II*, 635-7. Dawes's introduction *ibid I*, xlvii - xlix also discusses the whole issue of the prebends of the Wessex nunneries. See too, *Reg. Mart.I*, 65-71; 97-98; 124-6 and 319-323 for similar enquiries regarding the churches of Fontmell and Gillingham, which were prebendal to Shaftesbury.

more after the conquest, implying that the pattern of which the nuns spoke in 1347/8 had origins in the Angevin era, probably in the great restructuring which took place at the end of the twelfth century; finally, that the system was set up even later, during the time of Archbishop Pecham (1279-1292). Paradoxically this last theory was also put forward at the 1347/8 enquiry (**56**).

The argument in favour of the canons being instituted in the 960s is not supported by what we know about the reform movement. The chief point about it was the reformists' revulsion to the established pattern of land holding which had grown up in many ecclesiastical institutions, whose inmates invariably came from families with long proprietorial traditions.[61] A prebend was a portion of land from which the canon or prebendary drew his income. It was sometimes actually called a portion. Edgar and Ethelwold saw the secular canons' personal appropriation of land and property as 'robbery of evil men,'[62] accordingly Edgar banished them from several monasteries:

> 'Fearing lest I should incur eternal misery if I failed to do the will of Him who moves all things in heaven and earth, I have, acting as the vicar of Christ, driven out the crowds of vicious canons from various monasteries under my control because their intercessions could avail me nothing. I have substituted communities of monks, pleasing to God, who shall intercede for us

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[61] This point has been developed by E. John, *Land tenure in England* (Leicester, 1960); *Orbis Britanniae and other studies* (1966); and P. Wormald, ed. 'The world of Abbot Aelfric,' in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish & Anglo Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983)

[62] For a fuller analysis of the background to Bishop Ethelwold's ideals, see P. Wormald, 'Ethelwold and his continental counterparts,' in *Bishop Ethelwold, his career and influence*, ed. B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988). And for special reference to the application of the *Regularis Concordia* within nunneries, see M.Gretsch, 'Ethelwold's translation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and its latin exemplar,' in *ASE*, 3 (1974).

without ceasing.'[63]

The land issue and the sexual morality issue were the two key concerns fuelling the reform movement, therefore granting the secular priests who supported the nuns independent lands, would have been contrary to the ideals of the reformists. It seems most likely that the *coenobium*, with Elfthryth at its head, provided new leadership and structure to a fading *minster* whose priests, or chaplains, had lived a common life, perhaps on the lines of those at Thatcham.[64] They may have been called secular canons at the time, but they were not canons in the Anglo-Norman sense, with prebends of their own. It may even have been that the prebends and portions of the abbey church were originally intended as endowments for chaplains to serve at the altars of the conventual church. This supports the theory that the early canons were, to all intents and purposes, abbey chaplains, and called such,[65] but the stress on them serving at the abbey's altars suggests they did not exercise pastoral care at this stage. Perhaps it was only when this need was recognised that the separate prebends, whose definition depended upon the clear concept of the freehold possession, came into being.[66] This would go hand in hand with parochial responsibilities.

In pre-Viking Wessex as a whole, the small churches and parishes which gave the prebends their identity and name, did not yet exist. It is believed that the parish

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[63] *Liber vitae: Register et Martyrology of New Minster & Hyde Abbey*, ed. W. de G. Birch (HRO 1892), 237. The translation is from R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1987 edition), 155.

[64] B.R. Kemp, 'The mother church of Thatcham,' *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* 63, (1968), 16-18. J. Blair, in Sawyer (1985), 114-116.

[65] *Reg. Pont. I*, xxxiii; & 41. Hamilton Thompson (1919), 149-151.

[66] This was a view put forward by A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The male element in nunneries,' in *Ministry of Women. A Report by a committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury* (1919), 150

churches were only gradually superimposed on cult sites in the outlying areas of the *parochiae* which were originally served by the priests of the mother church: the early chaplains. Although Anglo-Saxon churches are known in Wessex, the main church-building programme occurred in this part of the country ~~occurred~~ in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[67] It would greatly help our understanding of the early community of Wherwell if we knew whether the parishes which later defined the prebends of Wherwell had been established by the time of the conquest. The *ecclesia* dedicated to the Holy Cross is the only church in Wherwell hundred mentioned in Domesday. Although, conceivably, small wooden chapels, or field churches, might have existed in each of the vills, it is improbable that any other churches were of sufficient importance to give name to a separate prebend at this date. The present building of the separate parish church in Wherwell, originally dedicated to the Holy Trinity; the churches of St. Nicholas, Middleton and St. Peter, Goodworth Clatford, and the chapels of Bullington and Tufton, all date from the last quarter of the twelfth century.[68] The building of these churches therefore suggests that an important structural reorganisation on a parish basis took place at this time, at least a hundred years after the conquest and two hundred years after the foundation. The new churches, although modest structures, of flint and chalk construction, nevertheless stood out as potent symbols of faith, confidence, and perhaps, clerical ambition (Part II, Figs 9 & 17).

However, the question of whether the coming of the Normans brought about earlier changes in Wherwell deserves examining. There is no doubt that the leading

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67 J.Blair (1992-5), 196. Also, J. Blair (1988), especially the chapter by R. Gem, 'The English Parish

continental clergy quickly sought to model their chapters on those of northern France, and to redefine their personal status as priests accordingly.[69] At the 1347/8 enquiry, the nuns said that although they knew nothing for certain about the establishment of the prebends, since they had nothing about it in their writings (*scriptis*), they believed that everything which the prebendaries received was established as the same time as the prebend 'in the manner of cathedral churches'(**56**). It was the Normans who set about redefining the consitution of their secular cathedrals.

The most famous set of rules laid down for canons of cathedral churches was the *Institutio* ascribed to Osmund, bishop of Salisbury (1078-1102). There is an authorship debate, however, because scholars believe it could not actually have been written in Osmund's time, making the *Institutio,* either a true forgery, or an effort by a later bishop of Salisbury, probably Joscelin de Bohun (1142-84), to codify the constitution established by Osmund half a century or more before.[70] In fact it more probably was the latter. As nephew of the Conqueror, Osmund was in a good position to establish valuable endowments for his clergy, still at that time based at Old Sarum, and in doing this, he secured the Norman hold on the church.[71] A significant point to note is that under Osmund's scheme two funds were set up to support the canons, the common fund, and the distinctive prebends or estates with which each canonry was endowed.[72] The recognition of the dual source of income,

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Church in the 11th. and early 12th.centuries.'

[68] *VCH Hants IV*, pp.400

[69] Blair, in Sawyer (1985), 132.

[70] D. Greenway, 'The false *Institutio* of St. Osmund,' *Tradition and Change: Essays in honour of Marjorie Chibnall presented by her friends on the occasion of her seventieth birthday*, ed. D. Greenway, C. Holdsworth & J. Sayers (Cambridge, 1985), 77-94. Also K. Edwards in *VCH Wilts III*, 156-168.

[71] *Registrum Sancti Osmundi, II*, ed. W.H. Rich Jones, RS 78 (1884), xxvii-xxviii.

[72] *ibid* xxix.

together with some hints about the rules and responsibilities of the canons, are all reflected in Wherwell's documents.

The issue of the existence of the common fund is of particular interest. **56** says that daily distributions of bread and ale from the monastery, as well as a dish from the kitchen and a ration of salt were due to those present at both the day and night hours, indicating that the resident canons had this additional support over and above the income received from their church or lay fee. Thus there was a dual source of income for the canons of Wherwell, firstly from an individual endowment and secondly rations financed from a common fund. In contrast, in the tenth century, the community of priests was probably wholly supported by a common fund.

The cartulary does not resolve the problem, although there is, in fact, a document in the cartulary headed *memorandum de porcionibus ecclesie conventus de Wherwell spectantibus* (**S25**). This is an undated charter which reveals a small endowment whose income amounted to around £3 8s. 2d. *per annum*. Presumably a common fund. Although conceivably it was designed to provide supplementary rations for the canons, it may have been to support the sacrists' office as it is in the sacrist collection.[73] Significantly, this fund originated in the thirteenth rather than the eleventh century. It was made up of seven small grants from known people, such as William of Anne and Thomas Pincerna who flourished during Abbess Euphemia's time (1213-1257). This fund is therefore most likely to have been set up during the thirteenth-century to support the sacrist's office. It is surely probable that there had

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[73] A clear discussion on the 'short-lived' nature of the common fund can be found in A.Hamilton Thompson, 'Notes on colleges of secular canons in England,' *Archaelogical Journal* 74 (1917).

once existed an earlier, more comprehensive common fund, which had lapsed, or was dissipated during the critical years following the fire of 1141.

It is still hard to prove conclusively when the changes were introduced at Wherwell, whether early in the Norman era or later, as is suggested. There is no doubt that the evidence from elsewhere suggests that big changes were afoot all over the country in the wake of the Conquest. A general trend can be discerned which can perhaps be described as the development of a coherent career structure within the church, designed to consolidate an Anglo-Norman church hierarchy. A factor driving the change was the improved standards of farm management and book-keeping instituted by the Normans, which required oversight of the abbey's lands by its priests. The granting of individual prebends encouraged this personal involvement, resulting in increased scrutiny of the abbey's estates, and greater profitability.[74] The references in the Wherwell documents to the importance of the canons' role in supervising the temporal affairs of the community are frequent, and suggest that the origins of their prebends was as much practical and economic as pastoral. This again points to their Norman origin, so the issue would seem to be whether Wherwell was in the forefront of the Norman reforms, targeted by the church hierarchy as a place where their ambitious priests could be placed and be provided with a regular income, or whether it adapted more slowly to these new ideas.

There is no direct evidence from Wherwell, except the assumption of the damaging effect of the 1141 fire, and the subsequent redefining of the parishes at the end of the twelfth century, but it is notable that following the great catastrophe of

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[74] Greenway (1985), 90-1.

1141, many of the lands were alienated (**60**), suggesting that a strong prebendary and supervisory system was not in existence to protect it.

Wherwell's situation can now be summarised. The weight of the discussion so far, combined with the lack of evidence in Ethelred's diploma about early prebendal arrangements, suggests that prebends were not established at Wherwell at the time of the foundation as the later nuns assumed. Although it is conceivable that the true canons and prebends were put in place soon after the arrival of the Normans, in line with their ambitions to restructure the English church, on balance it seems extremely unlikely. Wherwell was probably not in the vanguard of change in the early Norman era. It is much more likely that prebends were introduced a hundred years after the conquest, a decade or so after the 1141 disaster, or even later. The abbey could have benefited from the initiative of the bishop of Salisbury who sought to legitimise the status of his canons by officially codifying and extending the scope of Osmund's original *Institutio*. Thus the rebuilding of Wherwell abbey after the 1141 fire was probably much more than a building project, important though this in itself must have been, and was the start of a wider parochial restructuring.

Winchester diocese had encouraged similar projects. Henry of Blois (1129-71) had been a notable patron of rebuilding and took initiative in giving legal framework to the establishment of many early prebends. The close association of Wherwell's canons with the household of Godfrey de Lucy (1189-1205), suggests that he might have encouraged the abbey to fund prebends for members of his household, though it should be stressed there is no direct evidence of this.

Other sources ~~sources~~ point in this direction, however, and certainly to close association with Winchester's bishops. The re-launch of the abbey at the end of the twelfth century coincided with the gradual development of the archive of documents which form the basis of the cartulary. The status of the clerics of the thirteenth century, is at least partially indicated in the witness lists of the documents it contains, showing these strong links. By looking closely once more at the 1347/8 documents, it is possible to clarify what status a prebendary actually had, and then the witness lists can be used to identify individual canons.

2.6. The later canons

The apportionment of funds, and responsibilities of the clergy were spelt out at the 1347/8 enquiry into the Wherwell prebend. **54** in particular, describes the situation in the middle of the fourteenth century. It describes how the four Wherwell canons each had a parish church annexed to their canonry. This provided them with two compatible benefices: one with cure, and one without. These canonries, or prebends, were Wherwell itself, with the chapels of Bullington and Tufton; Middleton; Goodworth, with Compton in Berkshire, and Bathwick in Somerset, with the nearby chapel of Wooley. The canon of Wherwell was the wealthiest because he was favoured with four acres of meadow, and allowances of 4s. in sterling and 2 bushels of salt from the monastery. The other three had two acres only, and there is no mention of any perk of shillings or salt. The canons were assigned a stall in the choir and a place in the chapter, and were entitled to be present at the election of any new abbess. They had customary responsibilities for the prebend, though apart from the maintenance of his church, and appointing and supporting the subordinate clergy,

these are not spelt out. **56** attempts to describe what the canons were entitled to, but the nuns admitted uncertainty as to whether all the canons received additional income to the the fruits and offerings of the parish church. They did know, however, that they were entitled to rations from the monastery kitchen. These are clearly itemised.

Turning to specific witness lists, the earliest charters in the cartulary belong to the beginning of Abbess Euphemia's reign. Although the charters are undated, the presence of Philip de Faukonberg, known to be a canon of Wherwell, provides the key. He is well documented elsewhere, and died in 1228. He came from an eminent family. His brother was Eustace de Fauconburg, king's treasurer and Bishop of London. The two brothers had begun their careers in the service of Godfrey de Lucy, Bishop of Winchester (1189-1205).[75] Philip was created Archdeacon of Huntingdon in 1223, and he also held prebends in Lincoln, St. Paul's Cathedral, Hereford. In spite of this, Philip only gradually emerges in the documents as the man of standing that he was. For instance in **417** Peter de Barraster and Philip de Faukonberg have no title or rank at all. Witnesses were generally placed in hierarchical order, so they might be presumed to have been of higher status than the chaplains, Daniel, William, John and Adam, who follow them, but why were Peter and Philip not called canons? Does this mean that they were not yet canons at the date the document was drawn up, suggesting that Wherwell did not have canons at this date, or was their title was merely omitted in the text? In **118** *domini* Peter and Philip, *clerici,* are similarly mentioned without canonical title, though these were presumably the same Peter de Barraster and Philip de Fauconberg of **417.** Only in

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75 *EEA VII,* 194-6.

the undated **398,** is Philip de Fauconberg at last given his full title of Archdeacon of Huntingdon, a position he had held since 1223, but he is still not called a canon of Wherwell.

The suspicion is that earliest documents were not sufficiently sophisticated to take account for all the subtleties of status. The failure to give the already distinguished Philip de Faukonberg any title or rank in **417,** suggests that the omission might have more to do with the scribe's style, or lack of it, rather than the actual parochial organisation that underlay Wherwell at that time. Perhaps the witness lists, with their multiple titles, are misleading. Neverthless more information can be gleaned about the other canons.

It is possible that the Simon Band, who appears in **33** alongside *dominus* Philip de Fauconberg, was the Simon who had previously just been, or just been called, a chaplain. In **125** *dominus* Simon, *capellanus* heads the witness list, suggesting he took precedence over the abbey's steward, Richard Makerell. **452** distinguishes between the first witness, *magister* John, and *domini* Simon, William and Hubert, *canonici.* We know that this was shortly after Philip de Faukonberg's death in 1228, so that it is definite that the title of canon was being used by this date. Simon was presumably the Simon Band of **33,** and it is possible that he was identical with the Simon who was rector of Compton at this time (**189**). Hubert was new. He served as canon for many years, still witnessing documents in both 1236 (**22**), and 1240 (**23**).

Wherwell's canons emerge more clearly in the documents from around 1228 onwards, and from these it can be seen that the men who held the highest offices as

canons and rectors, were men of considerable distinction and education. Apart from *Dominus* Philip de Faukonberg, there were *magister* Giles of Bridport and *magister* Aubrey de Vitriaco, rectors of Middleton and Goodworth respectively. The title *magister* signified that the holder had a university degree. Giles of Bridport was archdeacon of Berkshire (1237-1255) and Bishop of Salisbury (1256-1262).[76] Aubrey de Vitriaco was a close associate of *magister* Hugh des Roches, Archdeacon of Winchester and nephew of Peter des Roches. He was also chaplain of Hugo Cardinal of S. Sabina.[77] Another early canon who served the des Roches family, was Robert de Clinchamps, whose career centred round the bishop of Winchester's treasury at Wolvesey.[78] These educated and influential men fit into the mould of the prebend holder who used the prebend as a valuable source of income from which to finance a serious career in the wider church. A role hugely beneficial to the episcopacy which they served, as well as themselves.

Considerable absenteeism must therefore be assumed, with its subsequent influence on the parochial structure. It was a recognised problem in Peter des Roches's day at Winchester (1205-38),[79] and it was widespread. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, answers to questions concerning the rules of residency of the rector of the church of Gillingham, which was prebendal to Shaftesbury abbey, brought forth the answer that no-one knew about the rules because no prebendary had

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76 D.E. Greenway ed. *Fasti Ecclesiae IV, Salisbury 1066-1300* (London, 1991), 5.
77 *EEA IX*, 172-3. *CPL I, 1198-1304*, 265.
78 *EEA IX*, 179
79 *EEA IX*, 1.

ever been resident.[80] The parallels between the Shaftesbury and Wherwell prebends have already been drawn.

Not all, however, neglected their responsibilities at Wherwell. Aubrey de Vitriaco witnessed several Wherwell charters (**11,21,50,**199**,259,287,389**), and resided at Wherwell sufficiently often to take issue with the abbess over his allowance of firewood (**39**). Similarly, Giles of Bridport witnessed at least nine documents (**11,12,22,23,41,**148,193**,287,**419), one of these as bishop (**23**). Some canons clearly had special responsibilities in Wherwell itself. One who was particularly active on the abbey's behalf was Wymund, canon of the 1250s and 60s.[81] He acted as the abbey's proctor in a dispute with the rector of Over Wallop, and he accompanied the nuns in their journey to London to report the death of Abbess Mary in 1259,[82] demonstrating his invaluable role in supporting the abbey in the years immediately following the death of Abbess Euphemia. He was conspicuously present at Wherwell witnessing at least 27 documents. Wymund is described in S7 as canon of Salisbury and rector of the church of Wherwell.[83] His only equal might be Henry le Wayte, canon of Goodworth, who masterminded numerous property transactions on behalf of the abbey in the fourteenth century, but interestingly, Henry never once witnessed a Wherwell document.[84]

The presence of many eminent churchmen at Wherwell, who incidentally held prebends elsewhere, suggests that a vigorous structure of canonries or prebends was in place at Wherwell by the 1230s, even though the witness lists do not invariably

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80 *Reg. Mart.*, 67.
81 *CPL I, 1198-1304*, 357-8; *CPR 1258-1266*, 13.
82 *CPR 1258-1266*, 13.
83 See *Fasti IV*, 43.

acknowledge their status. It seems highly unlikely that they would have accepted canonical status at Wherwell unless a secure income from a prebend went with it. It is interesting, however, that although in the first half of the thirteenth century, frequent use is made of the title *dominus, clericus, magister, canonicus* and *rector,* as well as the ubiquitous *capellanus,* the word prebendary is never used. It is not until 1342 that this occurs, when *dominus* John of Shaftesbury was called a 'prebendary of the church of Goodworth' (**159**). Yet in 1348 he declared that he was chaplain of the prebend of Goodworth in the monastery of Wherwell (**181**), and he does not call himself a canon at all.[85]

In spite of this confusion, it seems that from 1236 onwards the witness lists did become more specific, and linked the canons to individual churches. **22** clearly states that Richard was Archdeacon of Barnstaple, and *dominus* Hubert, was canon of Wherwell. Clearer still are **23** and **11.** In **11** Thomas of Winchester was cited as *rector* of the church of Wherwell; Giles of Bridport as *rector* of the church of Middleton; *magister* Aubrey as *rector* of Compton, presumably in successor to Simon (**189**), and Hubert as *rector* of Bathwick. **23** is the same, omitting only to say that Giles was from Bridport. They were, both charters says, 'all at that time clerks and canons of Wherwell'. The thirteenth century canons of Wherwell were then not just *canonici* and *clerici,* they were *de facto* prebendaries as well, and invariably rectors, too.

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[84] See Chapt. 8.

[85] According to *Reg. Edington II,* 19, John of Shaftesbury was indeed canon of Wherwell in 1348, as the entry says he had become blind and was unable to fulfill his duties. A year later, as canon, he presented a priest to the vicarage of Goodworth *ibid.* 65.

The exact dates of the creation of the prebends, however, is not yet accounted for. Inadequate documentation makes certainty impossible, as much in the clerics' status as the structure of the parishes themselves. What was the position with Goodworth and Compton, for instance? The rectors who held Compton in the 1230s have already been referred to above, but there is no record of a rector of Goodworth as early as this, although the papal privilege of 1228 confirms that Wherwell held the church (**3**). By 1304, however, Compton had been annexed to the prebend of Goodworth, and was now much sought after. Clarification of the exact status of the Compton in relation to Goodworth was of vital concern to any new incumbent, because following a stream of concessions granted by Innocent IV (1243-1254), a cleric could acquire a new prebend without getting special dispensation, so long as he already had already got a papal dispensation for holding more than one benefice. These could be with or without cure.[86] Hereafter there seemed to be a growing distinction between a rector and a prebendary.

However, it is not only the modern student who is baffled. The fourteenth-century Bishop of Salisbury couldn't decide what the correct status was either, claiming this was because Wherwell was 'a nunnery outside the common law.' The record of this case reflects the complexity of the law and the importance of the issue to ambitious clerks, but it also suggests that the the annexation had been established a generation or more ago, before anyone living could remember.[87] Possibly this was while Aubrey de Vitriaco was canon, in the 1230s. Thus the appearance or not of canonical status in the documents may reflect either the yet un-differentiated legal

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[86] M. Gibbs & J.Lang *Bishops and Reform 1215-1275* (Oxford, 1934), 113-117, 164-73. Precedents

status between a canonry and prebend, or just the immaturity of the thirteenth century record keeping.

It is plausible that as the benefits of prebendary status became more obvious, the lack of adequate record keeping increasingly irked both the Abbess of Wherwell and the episcopal establishment. By the end of the thirteenth century there had been an increasing number of disputes over the presentation and possession of benefices, consequently the church sought, and gained, much greater control over the actual canonical possession of a benefice.[88] Any clerk needed to go through an elaborate procedure in order to secure his church. This involved the receipt of a letter of presentation, an enquiry into the benefice by episcopal mandate, an assembly of a jury of recognitors, written returns confirming the vacancy, an investigation into the applicant's claim to a canonry, more inquests, etc. Only after this was completed was a formal 'institution' possible.[89] Possibly the nuns were referring to these new formalities when they spoke of the canons being instituted at the time of Archbishop Pecham (1279-92), when he visited Wherwell in 1284. His much needed initiative would have accounted for the nuns' claim that the institution of the prebends was due to him (**56**). Yet in reality, Pecham's role was surely to clarify a structure that had probably been in existence from the first half of the thirteenth century, and whose roots lay in the chaplains or canons who had served Wherwell since the foundation.

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are quoted in *CPReg. VIII,* 506; *IX,* 255.

[87] *Reg. Gand.*, 635; xlix.

[88] The pressures put on Wherwell through the demand for beneficies in the thirteenth century is the subject of Chapter 5.2., below.

[89] J.W. Gray, 'The *Ius Presentandi* in England from the Constitution of Clarendon to Bracton,' *EHR* 1952, 481-508.

2.7. Developments in the parish structure

The prominent and educated canons who occupied Wherwell's benefices during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were, of course, dependent on the subordinate clergy at Wherwell, for fulfilling their clerical obligations. The 1347/8 Enquiry is again invaluable in understanding what the situation was (**54**): It describes how each canon nominated a perpetual vicar, who was instituted by the diocesan, to serve in his own parish church. In addition to nominating a vicar for his parish church, each canon was obliged to appoint a chaplain to serve the nuns in the conventual church. The vicar of Wherwell had the additional task of appointing chaplains to serve at the chapels of Bullington and Tufton, and although **54** does not say so, because the enquiry concerned only Wherwell, the canon of Goodworth appointed a perpetual vicar to Compton after Compton was annexed. Likewise the canon of Bathwick was responsible for finding a chaplain for Wooley. Totally freed from parish duties, the canons could then concentrate on their main task of assisting the nuns in their temporal affairs, taking their seat in the chapter, and fulfilling their careers in the wider church.

Legally, though, the canons were rectors whose prime function was *cura animarum*,[90] however, as is implied in the 1347/8 enquiry, the rectors were allowed to delegate their pastoral responsibilities to a subordinate vicar. They had their predecessors. According to Addleshaw, the priests who originally undertook the

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[90] It is interesting that in the 1317 enquiry into the status of Gillingham referred to above in relation to the problem of many prebends belonging to the Wessex nunneries, that one of the prime duties of the prebend was to officiate in the divine service in Shaftesbury Abbey. No-one had seen the prebendary in person at Gillingham itself. *Reg.Mart.*, 67-8.

pastoral duties were chaplains dismissable at will.[91] Perhaps the numerous chaplains who were witnesses to the Wherwell documents in the first half of the thirteenth century had these responsibilities. Recurring names in the charters are Daniel, William, John, Ralph, Anktill and Simon, all chaplains (**118**).

By the the time of the Wherwell enquiry in 1347/8, however, vicars had taken over the responsibilities of the parishes,[92] though interestingly not one vicar witnessed any documents in the Wherwell cartulary, and the chaplains had ceased to be witnesses by 1300. It is unlikely, therefore, that vicars had become established at Wherwell before the end of the thirteenth century, which puts it behind the times. Hartridge places the first vicarages at the beginning of the thirteenth century, or just before. An interesting quote from an Inquiry concerning churches belonging to the Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1181 demonstrates his point:[93]

> 'Let there always be in a village a distinction of persons; let there be one who has charge of temporal matters, and another who ministers to spiritual needs. .....let there be ordained a vicar .....who while he serves at the altar may be content with the altar.'

There follows a detailed description of the apportionment considered appropriate. Hartridge notes the papal concern to see that there was proper distribution of income between the rector and his subordinate vicar. The thirty-second decree of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 addresses this issue forcefully. However, in spite of these early rulings, vicarages were not common in Hampshire at this period. Even by

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91 G.W.O. Addleshaw, *Rectors, vicars and patrons in the 12th & early 13th.c. in Canon Law* (London, 1987), 7-12.

92 *VCH Hants II*, 19-21 gives a good review of the development of vicarages in Hampshire.

93 R.A.R Hartridge, *History of Vicarages in the Middle Ages* (1930), 30.

1291, only 37 existed.[94] Haines says that the institution of vicars in the diocese of Winchester took place between 1318 and 1321,[95] which would follow Pope John XXII's bull *Execrabilis* of 1317. This bull clearly marked the improvement in status for the vicar and his differentiation from the temporary chaplains. It sought to strengthen parish provision by forbidding plurality of benefices with cure, indicating that absenteeism had become a problem, and that there was an urgent need to see that vicars were adequately remunerated and properly instituted. The 1347/8 enquiry shows that the 1317 bull was indeed considered a landmark, and that it marked the institution of the first perpetual vicar at Wherwell. Meanwhile, the increasingly important role of the bishop in ensuring pastoral provision shows up in **56** and **57,** which both explain that the crucial difference between a vicar and a temporary chaplain was the insistance on the vicar's institution by the bishop, giving the vicar a much higher status than the chaplain.

It may be that the chaplains of the fourteenth century were in effect of lower status than those of the thirteenth. However, in 1281, the abbess had need of a proctor to represent her at an important enquiry into her right to certain tithes, and her representative was *dominus* Richard of Overton, *capellanus* (**194**), surely a man of some education.

These differentiations between the clerical ranks meant that the apportionment of church funds became a constant source of tension. The issues which were most often disputed by the rector or vicar were the right to take baptisms and funerals,

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[94] H.W. Ridgeway, 'The Ecclesiastical career of Aymer de Lusignan,' in *The Cloister and the World,* ed. J.Blair & B. Golding (Oxford, 1996). For Peter des Roches's policy on vicarages, see *EEA IX,* l-liii.
[95] R.M. Haines, 'Adam Orleton and the Diocese of Winchester,' in *JEccH* (1972), 26.

together with the fees pertaining.[96] These problems emerged at Wherwell, where the abbey maintained its status as mother church. The Wherwell endowment consisted of the small parish church of the Holy Trinity and the subordinate chapels of Bullington and Tufton. The little parish church was physically dominated by the Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Cross, which was only yards away, and was served by four temporary chaplains appointed by the canons in their role as rectors and prebendaries. Potential tension therefore existed both between the canon and the abbey; the canon and his appointed perpetual vicar, serving the parish church; the abbey and the parish's vicar; the abbey chaplains and the vicar; and the vicar and the chaplains of the subordinate chapels of Bullington and Tufton, whom he himself appointed.

54 states that Bullington and Tufton were in all respects like parish churches, being entitled to minister the sacrament, baptize infants, and bury the dead. **56** repeats the view. They are entitled to *baptistarium sepulturam et viaticum.* **57,** however, suggests that the parish church had no such privilege:

> 'In the nave or body of the conventual church there is one stone font for the baptism of children from the whole vill and parish of Wherwell, established of old, in which from the first foundation, all children were accustomed to be baptized; nor is there any other font in any of the other churches of the parish.'

There was no font in the church of the Holy Trinity. This became so resented by the people of Wherwell parish, that in 1415 they attempted to install a font of their own in the parish church [**C**] f.213v. Their action was halted by one of the abbess's

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96 P.H. Hase in Blair (1988) pays particular attention to the conflicts which ensued in other places in

chaplains who angrily confiscated it and removed it to the abbey church. The thwarted parishioners whereupon brought a writ of trespass against the abbess's chaplain for entering the parish church, which was only resolved by four arbitors. They upheld the abbey's claim to have baptised all the children of the vill since the foundation, and ordered the parishioners' *vas lapideum* to be removed to the nun's kitchen *ad opus carnorum,* surely a humiliating defeat for the champions of the parish church. In the light of this important *controversia et perturbatio* it is interesting that neither the bishop nor his officers were involved in the settlement, rather men of Andover were asked to arbitrate. This is a very different way of resolving things than that sought by Abbess Mabel de Tichburne in 1271 when Wymund, rector of Wherwell and she had a dispute over the conduct of funeral rites, the churching of women and other matters. Here, both sides agreed to abide by the judgement of the bishop, but his ruling is not recorded (**S11**).

Wherwell claimed other privileges as a mother church. On the feast days of the Exaltation and Invention of the Holy Cross, as well as Palm Sunday and the feast of the Purification, no services were allowed in the parish and prebendal church, but only in the conventual church of St. Cross. Only the ritual readings of the bans of marriage and necessary burials were allowed in the parish churches (**57**). These privileges meant that the abbey church benefited financially to the detriment of the parish church. This may have contributed to the cavalier manner in which the canon of Wherwell treated his church in the fourteenth century. It was because of his

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Wessex. See also Hase (1994).

twenty years of neglectful management that the abbey attempted to suppress the prebend in 1347/8.

Some disputes over the status of the abbey's churches were with other religious houses: **240** gives a detailed report of a *controversia* between the Prior of Bath Cathedral Priory over the status of the *capella de [Bath]Wyke* and the *capella de W[oo]ley* in Abbess Matilda's time. Proof of the status of Bathwick as the mother church is furnished by the note that the priest had to collect the chrism and oil from the Bishop or his Archdeacon; on the other hand both were entitled to bury their dead in their own cemeteries, which had been consecrated by the Bishop. These various issues were sorted out by the Bishop of Bath and Wells himself, demonstrating the valuable role played by the episcopate in the early years of these parishes.[97] For the protection of the Abbey's rights and the resolving of controversy, the Bishop's role was increasingly valued. One might only perhaps conclude by saying that in spite of increased regulation and more written evidence, the apportionments and responsibilities of the canons and their staff gained in complexity rather than eased. Thus we have the much fingered and marked record of the 1347/8 Enquiry in the Wherwell cartulary, and the permanent record of the bishop of Salisbury's inability to understand what was going on in spite of the hugely lengthy reports entered in his register in 1304.[98]

It remains to be said that the prebendary of Wherwell was in a particularly difficult position, overshadowed as he was by the great abbey church. The prebendal churches of Middleton, Bathwick with Wooley, and Goodworth with

Compton all seem to have had spiritual independence, in that they were recognised as parish churches, with all the rights of baptism, marriage and burial associated with that status.

The issue of pastoral provision and the foundation of the prebends has been discussed at length in this chapter, and the weight of evidence suggests that it was not until the beginning, or even the middle, of the thirteenth century that the chaplains who had served the monastery stood aside for a higher class of canon, who drew an income from a specified church. Chaplains, however, retained pastoral responsibility at Wherwell until the institution of vicarages at the beginning of the fourteenth century, after which their status was diminished.

2.8. Wherwell Hundred

Evidence of the foundation of Wherwell abbey has so far pointed to conclusions regarding the foundress, the dating of the abbey and to the nature of the religious institution which preceded it, and which finally developed into something resembling the parish system as we know it. Equally important is the question of the administrative history of Wherwell.

As noted above, the documentary evidence strongly suggests that Wherwell was in the hands of the West-Saxon royal house from early days. A copy of the will of King Eadred (946-955) survives in the *Liber Monasterii de Hyda.* In this will he bequeaths Wherwell, along with two other estates, to the New Minster at

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[97] *EEA X,* 53, contains a Confirmation of the payment of a pension to the Priory from the chapel of Bathwick. On f.214.v there is a 15th.c. document regarding a dispute over the prebend of Bathwick.
[98] *Reg.Gand.I,* 635. See n.60 above.

Winchester.[99] He can only have done this if Wherwell was part of his royal inheritance, and this is therefore of real significance.[100] Furthermore, circumstantial evidence also makes it far more likely that Wherwell was the centre of an ancient royal estate, for at Wherwell, the boundaries of the *parochia* are more or less synonomous with the boundaries of the hundred, all reinforcing the idea that Wherwell had, at some time in the tenth century, been granted a franchisal hundred, and that the boundaries were based on those of an ancient royal vill, whose origins lay back in the seventh and eighth centuries.[101] Until recently, it was widely accepted that in the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon kings - in particular Edward The Elder (899-924), his son Eadred (946-955), and grandson Eadwig (955-959) - granted several franchisal hundreds to religious houses, but Wherwell has no documents to support such a privilege.[102] This has now been strongly challenged,[103] and there has been considerable debate as to how far the crown surrendered its rights to jurisdiction in these hundreds, and thus what profits of justice both the crown and the franchise holders were able to enjoy. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.8

With regard to Wherwell hundred, moving from circumstantial to real evidence presents difficulties, even when documents have survived. For instance, Wherwell's hundred is not always called the Hundred of Wherwell in the sources.

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[99] See above. D. Whitelock, ed. *English Historical Documents I, 500-1042* (2nd. edition, London, 1979).

[100] King Eadred, a grandson of Alfred the Great, was a son of Edward the Elder (899-924) and Queen Eadgifu. See too, H. Cam, *Liberties and Communities* (Cambridge, 1944), 58-9, 84-5.

[101] Yorke (1995), 185. P.H.Hase, 'The Church in the Wessex heartlands,' in *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex,* ed. M. Aston & C. Lewis (Oxford, 1994), 53ff.

[102] Cam (1944), 59-60.

[103] P. Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice in the early English Kingdom,' *Property and Power in the early Middle Ages* ed. W. Davies & P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1995)

Puzzlingly, in the Domesday Book it is called *Welford* rather than Wherwell.[104] Although this is perhaps a logical name bearing in mind the topography of the area, (there clearly were wells or springs at Wherwell, and the river was fordable at this point),[105] it does seem that whatever privileges Wherwell had been granted, they were not efficiently documented by either the Anglo-Saxons or the early Normans.

The confusion is reflected in the records of a fourteenth-century enquiry, where it was said that the hundred had been held by the abbey *a tempore quo non existat memoria* and *de fundacione Ethelredi,* but the name of the hundred was not Wherwell, or *Welford* but *Mestowe.*[106] One explanation of this is that *Mestowe* was an erroneous reading of *Westover,* a manor a mile or so to the west of Wherwell on the west bank of the Anton, down river from the Clatfords, but why this should have been given prominence can only be guessed at.[107] Westover was named in the deed of transfer of the abbey's assets to Sir Thomas West in 1540,[108] but there is no mention of it in any of the documents in the cartulary. One surviving fourteenth-century charter says that payment is to be made *ad hundredum de Wherwell apud la Monstowe.*[109] If there was a confusion beween *Westover* and *Mestowe,* it is possible that the building wherein the hundred and manor courts had traditionally been held - *Mustwood* - was somehow connected with the confusion. *Mestowe, Westover* and

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104 *DB*, 18-20.

105 The Old English names for Wherwell were *Hwerwyl, Hwerwillon or Hwaerwellan,* all derived from the Old English word *hwer*, meaning kettle or cauldron. *Concise Dictionary of English Place Names,* 4th.edition, ed. E. Ekwall (Oxford, 1960), 512. G.B. Grundy, *The Saxon Land Charters of Hampshire* (1925-31). Ethelred's diploma refers to the monastery and vill as being called Wherwell because they were in the vicinity of a spring (1).

106 PRO KB 27/466.

107 There was a Liberty called Westover within the hundred of Christchurch, which had no association with Wherwell whatever. *VCH Hants V,* 133.

108 *Monasticon II,* 640-641.

109 HRO 19 M61/364.

Mustwood bear strong resemblance, and it has already been noted how commonly scribal error occurred.[110]

The hard evidence concerning the Abbess's claim to the jurisdiction of Wherwell Hundred is to be found in the Eyre Roll of 1280-1, which contains the record of the *Quo Warranto* proceedings initiated by Edward I in 1279.[111] At the hearing before Justice Rochester, the jury from Wherwell hundred swore that the hundred belonged to the Abbess of Wherwell, and that within that hundred she claimed the right to have a gallows, to hold the assize of bread and ale, transgressions of weights and measure, the view of frankpledge, and *infangenetheof* and *utfangenetheof.* She did not know by what warrant she held these rights. The abbess turned up in person at this hearing and gave further evidence of the extent of the manors which she claimed to hold *in capite de domino Rege in liberam et puram elemosinam* (Part II, fig.14). There is no ambiguity in these Eyre Rolls about the identity of Wherwell Hundred or the jurors who represented it.

In summary, the origin of Wherwell hundred cannot be definitively verified, no more by us than by Abbess Mabel de Tichburne at the *Quo Warranto* proceedings, yet she and her predecessors had exercised jurisdiction over the hundred for generations, apparently without trouble. The reference to *infangentheof* and *utfangentheof* suggests Anglo-Saxon origins, but whether this arose *de fundacione*, or indeed from when precisely the foundation can be counted, remains lost in the mists of time.

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[110] *VCH Hants IV*, 401 is the source of the speculation over *Mestowe*, and the reference to *Mustwood* also comes from there, though not the suggestion that the similarity of names led to confusion.

[111] PRO JUST 1/789 m.25. The same evidence is also to be found in JUST 1/784 and JUST 1/786.

CHAPTER 3 THE ABBEY'S WEALTH

3.1. From the foundation to Domesday

At the 1347/8 enquiry, the nuns claimed that 'from its first foundation, the abbey had been endowed with 300 marks of silver in land, income and possessions for the sustenance of 40 nuns' (**55**). It is extremely unlikely that Elfthryth's *nobile coenobium* had so many nuns at the beginning of its life; indeed at Wherwell, 40 seems to have been regarded as a significant number, as this was the number of nuns allegedly enrolled under the famous Abbess Matilda (?1174-1213) (**60**).

Verification of the extent of the initial endowment can be found in the cartulary in Ethelred's Diploma, apparently made shortly after the death of his mother in 1001/2.[1] It confirms Elfthryth's gift of Wherwell and the surrounding *ville* (1), which can be presumed to be Middleton, Goodworth, Anne and Tufton.[2] Elfthryth also endowed her new foundation with 60 *cassati* in Dean (*Ethelingedene*), Sussex.[3] Appended to the diploma was an additional grant made in 1008 by Ethelred himself of 29 properties (*praedia*) in Winchester and 10 hides (*mansa*) in Bullington. A *mansa* might be described as being land sufficient for one peasant household, or *manens.*[4]

Ethelred's diploma forms the central evidence of the Abbey's initial endowment, and is of such importance that some attention must be paid to its authenticity. Addressed to the Abbess Heanfled, it apparently demonstrates that the

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1 P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (London, 1968), S904, p.276. S904 can also be found on the *Electronic Sawyer*: *Late tenth & eleventh century*...King Ethelred the Unready (S 832a-946) 31.

2 As listed in *DB*, 15 - 17.

3 Thought to be East Dean in the hundred of Westbourne & Singleton, *VCH Sussex IV* (1953), 94-5.

4 F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and beyond* (Cambridge, 1921), 334-7.

community had pressed successfully for freedom from royal domination following Elfthryth's death; henceforth they were free to elect their own abbess and were free from public services. Perhaps even more importantly, Ethelred's grant of the land in Dean was made specially to provide food and clothing for the nuns, thus Wherwell was apparently a monument to what the reform movement had always wanted to achieve: a religious house severed from royal control and exploitation.[5] Bearing in mind the strength of these concessions, the possibility of forgery must be entertained.

The original diploma no longer exists, but an account of its condition in 1260 was recorded when Henry III confirmed the diploma (1). Then it was described as being in very poor condition and lacking a seal. The absence of seal could add weight to the idea that it was a forgery, but equally it might indicate the document's great antiquity, and the possibility that it might have been genuinely damaged; if it was original, by Henry III's time, it would have already been around 250 years old.

It is hard to see how the issue can be taken beyond the conclusions reached by specialist historians. Simon Keynes seems to accept its authenticity. By comparing it with other diplomas granted by Ethelred, notably to Shaftesbury in 1001 and Burton in 1004, he sees the document as evidence that there was a single agency responsible for the production of several diplomas around this time.[6] He also notes that there are comparable scriptural quotations and parallel structures for various clauses in the texts. Close analysis of the witness list leads him to the conclusion not only that the diploma was genuine, but that it was written shortly before 23 April 1002.[7] Other

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5 P. Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries & reforming Churches' *P&P* (1999), 26-7. See too Stafford, *Queen Emma & Queen Edith* (1997), 138, 153; and Stafford (2000), 12.

6 Keynes (1980), 104-117. See too, *Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, ASC (Oxford, 1996), 188-9.

7 Keynes (1980), 258.

historians express caution. Finberg claimed that the witness list was dubious,[8] but this is because of the defective edition published by Kemble, whose witness list compares unfavourably with Egerton 2104A.[9] Biddle also concludes that Ethelred's diploma might well have been a forgery, but his caution is based on the scepticism of others. [10] He finds it convincing that Wherwell had acquired its Winchester property 'by the time of Edward the Confessor', but is reluctant to say that it went back as far as Ethelred's time. Because the Winchester tenements were within the old city walls, however, they probably were bequeathed by a member of the royal family.[11] The fact that Ethelred's grant of the 20 *praedia* in Winchester is spelt out in Anglo-Saxon as well as in Latin is also of significance,[12] and the language used in the diploma to describe the landholdings in general is certainly suggestive of a pre-conquest date. The word *hida,* which belonged to the Norman era, is not used; instead we find *mansa,* together with the characteristic word *villa* for estate, and *praedium.*[13] All this would make it improbable that the diploma was forged in the early Norman era.

In summary, then, the case for a definite forgery is not made, and for the purposes of this thesis, Ethelred's diploma is being accepted as genuine.

If the original endowment can confidently be said to have been confirmed by Ethelred in 1002, how did it stand up to the turbulances of the next hundred years?

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8 *The Early Charters of Wessex* ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Leicester, 1964), 61.

9 *Codex Diplomaticus Anglo-Saxonici* Vol. 3, ed. J.H. Kemble (London, 1845), 322. The text is known as K707. Keynes (1980), 258.

10 M. Biddle, *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages:* Winchester Studies, Vol. I (Oxford, 1976), 457. On p. 342 there is an illustration of the Abbess of Wherwell's property in the city.

11 Meyer, *RB* 91 (1981), 348.

12 An *Inspeximus* of Henry III, dated 12 October 1259, was sold in 1991, and was noted by P.E. Szarmach & J.T. Rosenthal eds. in *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture* (Michigan, 1997), 133. The *Inspeximus* is now in Oslow. For the Anglo-Saxon text, see *Monasticon II,* 637.

Even by the turn of the century, harassment by the Danes was increasing. Elfthryth's own property in Dean in West Sussex was the scene of a major battle in 1000;[14] and although the lands were held at this time, at some point during the turbulant years which followed, they were lost to the abbey. In 1002, Ethelred's rash order to massacre the entire Danish population of England, the infamous St. Brice's Day massacre, brought predictable reprisals, which included persistent raiding of the south and east of England. 1011 was a particularly bad year, when the Danes overran Wessex, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, indeed much of southern England, burning and pillaging as they advanced.[15] We have no evidence of how Wherwell bore up under the strain of these years, only the evidence of its survival as a community, which can be measured by its extent spelt out in the Domesday survey of 1086. The survey broke the figures down as follows:

Wherwell 13 hides [TRE 22 hides] Tufton 3.5 hides [TRE 7 hides]

Goodworth 5 hides [TRE 3 hides] Anne 3.5 virgates [TRE 5 hides]

Middleton 10 hides [TRE 20 hides] Bullington 10 hides [TRE 10 hides]

Winchester 31 messuages & 1 mill [16]

This amounts to approx 45 hides in 1086, compared with the 67 hides of Edward's reign. The most critical loss since the time of Ethelred was the property in Dean.[17] The cartulary record of Domesday is brief, and includes only the TRE figures for the principal vills (354). The entry does not include details of the lands held in demesne,

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13 C.E. Fell, *Edward King & Martyr* (Leeds, 1971), xx. See too, Maitland (1921), 333-7.

14 *ASChron*, 85. See too, B.Dickens, 'The day of the Battle of Ethelingedene,' in *Leeds Studies in English* 6, Supplementary papers 1-2 (1937)

15 *ASChron*, 91. 'Annales de Wintonia' in *AM II*, 14-16; *Chronicle of John of Worcester II*, ed. R.R. Darlington & P. McGurk (Oxford, 1995), 606-7; Coldicott (1989), 20-1. D. Bates, *William the Conqueror* (Saffron Walden, 1989), 70-71.

16 *DB*, 15-17.

the ploughs and meadows, the numbers of villeins, cottars and serfs, nor the mills and fisheries, the number of swine, nor the extent and quality of the woodlands. The difference in the hidage recorded TRE and those recorded in 1086 reflects a national pattern. Spoilage could have occurred through devastation caused by the advancing Norman invaders, which definitely occurred in this part of the country,[18] or through deliberate attempts by the surviving communities to take land out of cultivation to lower their tax burden. Forced set-aside, caused by shortage of labour, following the loss of able bodied men in the war, might also have been a reason.

Whatever the case, the core holdings of Wherwell Abbey are set out clearly in the Domesday record, and it is worth commenting that for all its prestigious beginnings as a royal house, and all the travails it had endured in the preceding century, and indeed its relatively high status at the time of the dissolution, Wherwell was a comparatively poor nunnery at this time. Its gross value was asessed at £52. 4s. 0d., way behind Wilton's £246. 15s. 0d and Shaftesbury's £234. 5s. 0d. Between these extremes lay Barking, Romsey, Winchester and Amesbury, with Chatteris bringing up the rear with a mere £20. 10s. 4d. [19]

3.2. Chief acquisitions in the Norman and Angevin periods.

The details of Wherwell Abbey's properties have been comprehensively catalogued in Diana Coldicott's book *Hampshire Nunneries.* Her Appendix 3 details the temporalities, which are principally its manors, rents from gifts of land and tenement holdings, and her Appendix 2 covers the spiritualities, which comprised its

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17 Perhaps appropriated by Earl Godwin who held the adjoining Singleton Manor. *VCH Sussex IV*, 94-5.

18 D.Bates, *William the Conqueror* (Saffron Waldon, 1989), 70-71.

19 *Chatteris*, 37- 40. D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England 940 - 1216* (Cambridge, 1950), 702 - 3.

churches and tithe income. She includes details of valuations made at various times, with other references. The object of the review in this chapter is therefore not to replicate Coldicott's careful research, but to highlight Wherwell's principal sources of income and its chief benefactors. The list below summarises the position in 1291, when the great assessment of Pope Nicholas IV was undertaken.[20]

Temporalities

Wherwell, with Westover.	£59. 13s. 6d.
Middleton	£39. 6s. 0d.
Tufton	£15. 16s. 0d.
Bullington	£18. 12s. 8½d.
Goodworth Clatford	£10. 0s. 9d.
Little Anne	£9 3s. 4d.
Ashey and Langbridge, Isle of Wight	£41. 6s. 2d.
East Compton, Berks	£13. 15s. 0d.
Bathwick & Wooley, Somerset.	£12. 5s. 0d.

These properties formed the basis of the abbey's wealth, but there was also income to be enjoyed from rents and properties not included in the *Taxatio*. From land near Penwith, Cornwall, there was an income of approximately £5 2s. 7½d. [21] and from 27 properties in Winchester, £8. 0s. 0d. There were also tenements in Bristol, Portsmouth and Southampton and rental income of under £1 each *per annum* from the following: Upton, near Hurstbourne Tarrant; Heckfield and Bramley, Hants; Appleshaw, near Andover; Wyke, near St. Mary Bourne; Inkpen, Berks; Artingdon, Surrey; lastly there were rents from mills at Newbury, Berks and Guildford, Surrey.[22]

Spiritualities

Wherwell, with the chapels of Tufton & Bullington	£40

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[20] *Taxatio*, 199, 214.

[21] The document in the cartulary which details this is very feint and is scarcely decipherable (**143**), in fact the figures given in the ms. do not add up to the given total. It is dated around 1230.

[22] See Part II, Fig.10 for a map showing the location of some of the abbey's more distant properties.

Middleton	£26. 13. 4d.
Goodworth Clatford	£12
with the chapel of East Compton, Berks	£13. 6s. 8d.
Bathwick, with the chapel of Woolley, Somerset	(Pension to abbess £1. 6s. 8d).
Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire	(Pension to abbess, £8)
Everleigh, Wiltshire	(Pension to abbess, £2)
Inkpen, Berkshire	(Pension to abbess, £5)
St. Martin's in Parchment Street, Winchester.	

Tithe income was due from ?Bremton, Cholderton, [Over] Wallop, Drayton in Barton Stacey, all near Wherwell; and from Langbridge & Newchurch on the Isle of Wight; Milston and Hannington in Wiltshire; and from Inkpen, Fulscot and Bradfield in Berkshire. Monastic possession of tithes, was, of course, the subject of frequent challenge, especially in the fourteenth century. There was a strong feeling that the tithes should go to the priests who served in the abbey's churches, rather than to the abbey itself. A compromise was frequently reached whereby the priest took the tithes, but he was obliged to pay a pension to the abbey.[23]

When this data is compared with Domesday, it can be seen that the principal churches and manors in the vicinity of Wherwell remained the abbey's prime source of wealth into the thirteenth century; nevertheless significant additions had been made, most notably the properties in the Isle of Wight and Somerset.

There is no record of how the manor of Ashey with Langbridge on the Isle of Wight came into the abbey's hands. The island was a liberty, granted originally by the Conqueror to William Fitz Osbern; but in time many monastic and religious institutions came to hold land on the island, including the bishop of Winchester. Ashey was in Ryde, within the greater parish of Newchurch. Like so many of the island's manors, it stretched north/south within the parish, reflecting a fair

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23 See Chapter 5.1. below

distribution of the varied terrain. It was of real value to Wherwell, yielding about 20% of the total income of the abbey.[24] In addition to the manor came a pension from the church and the tithes (**3**). In 1255 there was a dispute about the tithes between the rector of Newchurch and the abbey, and in this it is clear that the tithes at issue were those arising from the mill and the turbary (**231**). A turbary is the right of digging turf or peat.

It is unlikely, either, that it will ever be known how the church of Bathwick with Wooley in Somerset came into the abbey's possession. They were once in the hands of Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, who after the conquest, ranked as the seventh most wealthy baron in the land.[25] Another property which had been in his possession, which also came into the hands of the abbey, was the manor of East Compton, in Berkshire, again of significant value to Wherwell. It has been suggested that some of the Bishop of Coutances's property reverted to the king after his death, from whence at some unknown date, it was gifted to Wherwell Abbey.[26] This seems a likely explanation, and it might have occurred early in the twelfth century since Abbess Matilda, made a particular attempt to regularize the traditional boundaries and the rights of the church at Bathwick at the end of the twelfth century (**240**). Old customs are referred to, both in regard to burial customs and the right of the bishop's men to take a particular route through the abbey's property, 'as their predecessors had done.' This is one of the earliest documents in the cartulary, and implies that Wherwell had enjoyed rights there for some time.

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[24] S. Hockey, *Insula Vecta* (Chichester, 1982), 66. Hockey also has interesting things to say about the early lay out of the parishes on the island. *ibid* 1 - 7.

[25] J. Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances,' in *EccHR 59* (1944).

[26] *VCH Berks IV*, 19-20.

The above examples suggest that substantial property was coming into the hands of the abbey during the late eleventh or twelfth centuries. Several more grants of this nature can be identified, but their source has not been established. The records of Wherwell in the first century after the conquest are virtually silent, nor, when there are records, do they seem to address the crucial issue of the origins of the properties in question. Even the wording used in the episcopal confirmations preserved in the cartulary is ambiguous. An early confirmation by Joscelin de Bohun, bishop of Salisbury (1142-1184) says that the abbey had held a number of tithes *ab antiquo*, which suggests a date well before Matilda. A casual reading of the phrase might suggest that the tithes were held as far back as the eleventh century or even earlier; this cannot be however, as most tithes mentioned were given by named donors whose gifts will be cited below; only the tithes of the demesne of Fulscot, Berkshire remain anonymous (**184**). Fulscot is usually entered in the cartulary as *Fughelescote.*

The question of when the tithes of Collingbourne Ducis, together with Everleigh, were granted to Wherwell abbey is also difficult to answer definitively. The abbey was patron of the church by 1228, and in 1291 it drew a pension of £10 from the two churches. **188** suggests that the tithes, at any rate, were granted originally by Bishop Jocelin himself (1142 - 1184), which would probably have been during Abbess Matilda's time. The special additional payment of 12 marks to the abbey each year 'for the increase and maintenance of hospitality', is indicative of a close contact between the cathedral and Wherwell abbey which probably originated in Matilda's day (**260**).

Mystery also surrounds one of the earliest documents in the cartulary: a mandate sent by Innocent III to the Abbots of Waverley and Hyde, to hear and decide a complaint made by the Abbess and convent of Wherwell against the chaplain of the church of *Bremton* (**S3**). The Abbess claimed they had these tithes peacefully, for a very long time, though from which time is not specified. There is no record anywhere else of the abbey holding tithes at Bremton, in fact, there is no certainty where Bremton was. Possible alternative readings might be Bremerton or even Cheriton, but no connection with these locations has been established.[27] There is a possibility that the tithes in question are those of Barton (Stacey), which were the subject of continued dispute;[28] alternatively, the learned abbots may have ruled that the abbey was not entitled to the tithes, since reference to Bremton is conspicuously absent from the thirteenth-century papal confirmations as well as from the final reckoning in 26 Henry VIII.

Another mystery is posed by the acquisition of lands and rents in Ringmarsh (*Wryngmersa*) and Bramley (*Bromely*) (**3, 4**).[29] Bramley was in north-east Hampshire and is sometimes grouped with *Heckfield* or *Hethefyle*; this makes sense geographically since there is a Heckfield near Bramley, but the location of Ringmarsh is obscure.[30] According to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, it was in Hampshire, and incidentally that source suggests that the income of the *Wringmershe* land was comparable to that of that raised by the rents of assize in East Compton, together with

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27 The mandate has been published in *Letters of Pope Innocent III*, ed. C.R. Cheney (1967) 209. He has read Egerton 2104A as 'Bremton,' and indeed this is what seems to have been written by the scribe.

28 See below

29 *Monasticon* II, 643.

30 It is possible that this property is linked to the rents gifted to the abbey in Euphemia's time by Mary Forester (**11**).

the tithes of Fulscot.[31] However, the modern gazetteers show no Ringmarsh in Hampshire. Conceivably it is a lost village.

It is also possible that the tithe income from three virgates of land in Cholderton originated in Matilda's time, or before, but there is no record of who donated it (**190-1,** 212). It is tempting to credit Abbess Matilda with drawing in all this support during the rebuilding period which followed the abbey's destruction in 1141. Her obituary records how, within twenty or thirty years of coming to Wherwell, she 'restored alienated and dispersed properties and acquired new ones, multiplying the rents and possessions'(**60**). Perhaps the dangers of rapacious neighbours was recognised by Bishop Godfrey de Lucy when he confirmed various tithes to the abbey in 1197, for he specially hoped that his confirmation would deter opportunist evildoers from claiming property which had been given to the abbey (**191**).[32]

Whereas it seems highly likely that the origins of many of the early grants to the abbey cited above belonged to Matilda's time, it has to be admitted that this is speculative. In some cases, however, speculation gives way to certainty. The best documented and most substantial additions to the abbey's landholdings are the two royal charters granting the abbey the right to assart a large acreage of woodland, and the first of these seems to celebrate the stability which Matilda had brought to Wherwell. This was a grant by Richard I to Abbess Matilda for permission to assart 40 acres of land in Harewood and 40 acres in Abbotswood. This was an important charter which was produced at the forest Eyre of 1348.[33] (**2**). Whatever the origins of

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31 *Monasticon II,* 642.

32 This confirmation is printed in full in *EEA IX,* 67.

33 PRO E 32/169. See too *WCM* doc. 2219.

all these early grants, it is clear that, during Matilda's time, the main manors and churches were now safely in the abbey's hands, and the productive potential of the land increased through assarting.

The remaining income was from tithes and rents; study of the origins of the former gives a clear picture of Matilda's gift for attracting patronage. The tithes of Drayton in Barton Stacey, for instance, were donated by Anktil *de Brayboef*, from a local knightly family, who was enfoeffed by the St. John family.[34] The extent of his donations fully laid out in the cartulary (**190-1,212,S1,S13**). The disputes which arose from these tithes are discussed in Chapter 5.1., and include a lengthy one between the abbess and the rector of Barton Stacey in 1267-70 (**266-280**).

A more prominent patron of Wherwell Abbey was Gervaise Paynel (?1140-1194 He granted two parts of the tithes of the demesne lands of the manor of Inkpen in Berkshire to Wherwell Abbey in the time of Abbess Matilda, and thus became one of her most notable patrons (**184,185**).[35] The extent of the vast land holdings, churches and tithes, enjoyed by many of the Norman settlers, came under increasing criticism, and this led those of scrupulous conscience, to grant tithes and churches to religious houses. Gervaise was one such man. He was a descendent of the William fitz Ansculf (fl.1086), whose family held extensive lands in Normandy and England, which later became annexed to the Barony of Dudley in Worcestershire. Gervaise was William's great-grandson. His mother was the daughter of Robert Ferrers, and Gervaise himself married Isabel Beaumont, daughter of Robert Earl of Leicester. Thus the Paynel family were really based in Worcestershire, and had important

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34 *VCH Hants IV*, 420.

35 *VCH Worcester III*, 90 fills in details of the Paynel family, and more can be found in *VCH Berks IV*, 201.

marriage links to those close to the royal court. However, Gervaise was active in the rebellion of the young prince Henry in 1173/4 against Henry II.[36] Gervaise gave parts of his Berkshire inheritance to several religious houses, including the nuns of Kintbury. Dudley Priory was also a beneficiary: in fact Gervaise actually founded Dudley Priory around 1161. It was to Dudley Priory that the church of Inkpen was given, with just two parts of the tithe being reserved for Wherwell.[37] These gifts created major problems, however. In common with many other places, disputes arose as to whether the tithe income should be enjoyed by the abbey itself, or the priests who served in its churches. This led to a serious conflict between the rector and the abbey in the fourteenth century, during the course of which the entitlements of the abbey were spelt out in minute detail (**66,67,104,107-9,183**).[38] The cost of defending these rights must have been considerable, and reflects their value Two parts of the tithes of nearby Bradfield were also granted to Wherwell by Gervaise Paynel, and Inkpen and Bradfield are frequently quoted in juxtaposition in the cartulary. Like at Inkpen, the Bradfield church itself was given to Dudley Priory by Gervaise.

Apart from Gervaise Paynel and Anktil *de Brayboef*, the abbey was indebted to two other patrons who supported the abbey during Matilda's time: William of London and Matthew *de Porteria*. Matthew *de Porteria* (d.1204) gave the abbey the tithes of Over Wallop, Hants. (**190-1,194,212**). Although **212** states that they had possessed these tithes *de donatione patronorum ab antiquo*, in fact Matthew Porteria

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36 J. Hunt, *Lordship and Landscape: a Study of the honour of Dudley* (British Archaelogical Soc. Pub., 1997), 32. A map showing the general spread of the Paynel lands in Berkshire and in the Dudley heartlands is on p.36.

37 *VCH Berks. IV*, 125.

38 See Chapter 5.1, below.

was a Norman who held several knights' fees in Hampshire in the 1160s.[39] Although it is conceivable that his gift was made as early as this, it seems more likely that the grant of these tithes was made in Abbess Matilda's time. The absence of this grant from the papal confirmation of 1228 probably contributed to the fact that the tithes were disputed, though they were included in Alexander IV's confirmation of 1257 (**3,4**).

William of London had more extensive interests. According to the Pipe Rolls, he held lands in Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire and Berkshire during the 1170s.[40] **184** records his gift of all the tithes from his demesne in Milston, near Amesbury, and two parts of his demesne in Hannington.[41] This is probably the Hannington which lies several miles to the north of Swindon, Wiltshire. The spelling remained relatively constant, being entered in *Comput' ministrorum* of 33 Henry VIII as *Hanydon, Wiltes*.[42] The distances involved probably contributed to the dispute which arose between the rector of Hannington and the Abbess in 1304 regarding the tithe (**352**). William's gift stands out as making a notable contribution to the re-establishment of Wherwell Abbey by Abbess Matilda in the last quarter of the twelfth century.[43] In summary, then, the principal private benefactors of Wherwell during Matilda's rule, were Gervaise Paynel, Matthew *de Porteria*, Anktil *de Brayboef*, and William of London.

Reference has already been made to the links between Abbess Matilda (?1174-1213) and Jocelin de Bohun of Salisbury (1142-84), but she also forged a

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39 *Red Book of the Exchequer I*, 28. *VCH Hants IV*, 534.
40 For instance *PR 21 Henry II*, 135; *22 Henry II*, 102; *26 Henry II*, 23; *27 Henry II*, 87;
41 Records of a later visitation can be found in *Register of John Waltham, Bishop of Salisbury 1388-1395*, ed. T.C.B. Timmins (1994), 135, 157.
42 *Monasticon II*, 643.

strong bond with Bishop Godfrey de Lucy of Winchester (1189-1205) and his family, which is reflected in the grant made to the abbey during the time when her niece, Euphemia, was Abbess. **143** records that Isabella de Lucy, whose great uncle was Godfrey de Lucy, Bishop of Winchester, granted to Wherwell all the rents of the land and appurtenances in Penwith, Cornwall, which had been given to her by her sister, Matilda. These had come from the honour of their uncle, Richard de Lucy.[44] This grant was made before 1228.[45] The abbey retained an interest in this land as some time between 1262 and 1281 Abbess Mabel de Tichburne granted, in return for a quit rent, all the land in various named vills in Cornwall to John de Lambourne, together with homage and service of numerous named tenants (**281**). Presumably the same land. A fourteenth-century *memorandum* states that the Wherwell demesne was in the Duchy of Cornwall, being the hundred of *Penwyn* in the parish of St. Just. [**f.81**].[46]

Another donor whose gift suggests a special connection with Abbess Euphemia was Beatrice de Faye;[47] she donated 20s. rent from the manor of Artington near Guildford, Surrey (**254**). Beatrice specified that this should go towards the annual maintenance of a chaplain to serve in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin at Wherwell, one of Euphemia's most cherished building projects, which is so charmingly described in her obituary (**59**).

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[43] See too **4** and 457.

[44] Probably Richard de Lucy II, grandson and heir of Richard de Lucy I, chief justiciar c.1153-1178. See **142** n.7.

[45] M.G. Cheney, 'Master Geoffrey de Lucy, an early chancellor of the University of Oxford,' in *EHR* (1967), 755.

[46] *CIPM VII*, 167.

[47] Perhaps the wife of William de Wintershull. He and Beatrice were granted the reversion of lands held by John and Lucy de Faye, in Bramley, Surrey. S. Stewart, *An Introduction to, and Edition of, the Surrey Eyre Roll of 1263* (Unpublished Thesis, University of London, 2001), Vol. 2, 374-7.

Further support for this Lady Chapel was received from Roger de Clere, who with the advice and consent of his wife, Matilda, confirmed a 10s. gift to be made for the maintenance of a cantor at the same chapel which was to be paid directly to the abbey by Roger's tenant, Walter of Otteworth (**207**). This was not honoured, for in 1241 Euphemia successfully sued for non payment of this rent.[48] Her award is referred to in a Final Concord dating from 1262-1281 (**407**), which describes how Euphemia had reached an agreement with Walter of Otteworth, at a court in Reading, presumably in 1241, whereby Walter had agreed to pay the abbey 10s. *per annum* out of rents he owed Roger de Clere. **208** represents Walter's acknowledgement of this agreement.[49]

The documents certainly show strong support from Surrey for Euphemia's chapel project. Also in Surrey, in Guildford itself, a mill was in possession of the abbey in the thirteenth century and apparently remained so until the dissolution. It might have been held in part ownership, since others are named as holders together with the abbess at the enquiry of 1278. There is no link to either Beatrice de Faye or Roger de Clere, but one of the co-owners was Geoffrey *de Brayboef*.[50]

The idea that Roger de Clere might be linked to the gift to Wherwell of some land at Tetbury, Gloucestershire, where, at the time of the dissolution a *firma* to the value of £1 is recorded, is tempting, but should be dismissed, in spite of there being a place called Chelworth only a few miles from Tetbury. The record of the two

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[48] Roger and Matilda de Clere also feature in the Surrey Eyre Roll, *ibid*, 333. Roger held the manor of Cranleigh and was not obviously related to the Earl of Gloucester whose holdings in Surrey were part of the honour of Clare. See too, *Pedes Finium: Fines relating to the County of Surrey*, ed. F.B. Lewis (Surrey Archaelogical Society, Extra Vol.1, Guildford, 1894) 25-6, nos. 273-4, 279.

[49] According to the Surrey records, Walter of Utteworth (*Utworth*) was a knight of standing in Surrey, holding the post of deputy sheriff in 1252. Stewart, Vol. 1 (2001), 160.

[50] *Calendar of Inquisitions, Misc. 1219-1307*, 345-6.

hearings held in 1242 and 1279 mentioned above regarding Roger's tenant, Walter of Otteworth (**207,208**) do indeed refer to a carucate of land in Chelworth, but the known Surrey connection of the de Clere and Otteworth families support identification with Chelworth in Surrey, rather than Chelworth near Tetbury. How the Gloucestershire lands came to be held by Wherwell is unknown.

On the whole, the records become more reliable during Euphemia's time, though one might wish for more detail. There are no clues to what prompted Matilda, widow of Henry Marshall, to donate lands and buildings in the Broadmeadow in Bristol, lying opposite the castle, to the abbey, but it was certainly in Euphemia's time, perhaps between 1226 and 1228, because 'rents and possessions' in Bristol are included in Gregory IX's confirmation of 1228 (**3**); there is no record of any other property in Bristol being held by the abbey. Henry Marshall was probably the son of William Marshall of Newport (**46,47**) who held an acre of pasture in *Brademere* of Maurice of Bevington. *Bradmere* was quite possibly identical to the Broadmeadow.[51] The chief lord was Jordan le Warre, but he himself quitclaimed all but 15d. of this rent (**48**). Jordan's mother, Agnes, confirmed this gift (**178**). The value of the rents is also not specified.

With regard to the other urban tenements, none of their sources are recorded. They were of substance, nevertheless; for instance in Newbury, the abbey had rent from a mill together with meadows, vineyards, lands and groves (**3**). These holdings had already been acquired by 1228, the date of Gregory IX's privilege. However,

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51 *The Cartulary of St. Augustine's, Bristol,* ed. D. Walker (Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Publication, 1998), 142, 158.

there are no other references to the Newbury property in the cartulary, although the abbey was still enjoying rents from there in 1539-40.[52]

There are many more references to the Southampton tenements, which are also mentioned in the papal confirmation of 1228 (**3**), but their origin is unknown.[53] The abbey was still receiving rent from tenants at the dissolution. With regard to Winchester, although it has confidently been suggested that the abbey had held substantial property in the city itself since before the conquest, an additional 12d. rent from land outside the south gate was given in free alms by Thomas *de Guninges* around 1230 (431),[54] bringing a small addition to the existing holdings. This is a much more solid piece of evidence than that for the source of the rents and tenements in the possession of the abbey in Portsmouth which were confirmed by Gregory IX (**3**); these do not seem to have been retained. Like those of Newbury and Southampton, their origin remains a mystery, however, apparently the abbess was entitled to profits arising from the Portsmouth ferry to the Isle of Wight.[55]

In the middle of the thirteenth century, around 1260, some further small additions were made which increased the abbey's prosperity, but whose sources have been lost. A thirteenth-century grant is recorded in the *Rotuli Hundredorum II*, noting that in the time of Henry III, John Wilberforce alienated a hide of land, held of the king in sergeanty, to Wherwell Abbey. It was *apud La Rode*, in Selbourne Hundred. There is no other record of this land.

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52 *Monasticon II*, 643

53 Some discussion of the abbey's management of these tenements is in 3.7. below.

54 William Parvo *tunc maior de Wynton* is the dating clue. He was mayor in 1228 & 1234.

55 *VCH Hants V*, 180 n.4. The reference is to manor rolls from Ryde, dating from the time of Edward II. See too, S. Hockey (1982), 66.

The identification of the additions made during the years of Abbess Matilda and Abbess Euphemia, is now almost complete. One important act of Euphemia was her success in emulating her aunt in continuing with the process of assarting, which had a great potential to increase the abbey's income. In 1245 Henry III granted permission to Abbess Euphemia to make assarts and purprestures amounting to 37 acres in Stonehanger, Upping and Anne (**209**).[56] This letter patent was produced at the Forest Eyre of 1279[57] and it compares with the grant made by Richard I to Abbess Matilda, mentioned above. In all, 109 acres of woodland was therefore brought under cultivation between 1180 and 1245.

3.3. Local acquisitions of the thirteenth century

Wherwell came to acquire additional parcels of land in Bullington and Wherwell during the time when Euphemia was abbess, and the charters concerning these lands demonstrate the complexity of the issues which afflicted rural communities during the thirteenth century. In fact there are over 110 charters relating to lands in Bullington in the cartulary, compared for 53 for Wherwell, 34 for Middleton and 10 for Goodworth. They demonstrate sparing generosity on the part of the more prosperous freemen, the importance of inter-marriage between the families, and hint at the presence of hardship or misfortune. On two occasions lands were surrendered in return for a corrody (**376,400**). The grants were generally small and included two parcels of land which were acquired from a Geoffrey of Bullington between 1226 and 1257 (**372**), as well as around eighteen acres from members of Thomas of Bullington's family (**396,397,398**). The total figure of lands acquired

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56 *CPR 1232-47*, 452. The editors have transcribed Stonehanger as *Stavenage*.
57 PRO E 32/161

from Bullington was actually higher than this, because several charters just say that the donor is giving 'all his lands and tenements' from a specified source, to the abbey (**374,387,400**) without giving details of acreage. Small amounts of rent were also quitclaimed in Bullington (**371,382**). The disengagement of the family from these lands is confirmed in various other quitclaims, also made in the middle of the thirteenth century (**376,380,384**). The Bullington charters represent a fascinating web of family connections, which are fully discussed in Chapter 4.6 below.

There are many other documents in the cartulary which represent gifts of various small parcels of land, given or sold to the abbey by named donors whose families are untraceable, but there are none from the twelfth century, even when Abbess Matilda was at her most dominant. This might reflect the improved standards of record keeping of the later century, alternatively, Euphemia's management policies may have reflected the widespread trend for landowners to take whatever opportunity they could to buy up parcels of land adjoining what they already had. Examples of this policy can be found when the abbey acquired land from John Cissoris (43) and Walter le Frye (**44**).

Some transactions are known by just one surviving piece of evidence, like the gift by Adam Franklin of a croft with messuage in Barton Stacey (**199**) or the rents in Appleshaw a few miles to the north west of Andover, to the value of 1 mark *per annum,* granted by Geoffrey *de Cundy* around 1258 (**96**). There are similar patches of evidence from all the villages; for instance Baldwin of Calne quitclaimed a virgate of land in nearby Forton during that period (**24**), and Henry le Frank surrendered land and rent in East Aston (**41**).

The grant by Mary Forester of rents worth 20s. *per annum* to the abbey from Heckfield and Upton sometime between 1237 and 1256 (**11,148**), is in a different category as it was a rare pious donation.[58] In the same vein, the cartulary also shows a quitclaim by Geoffrey Mauncel to the abbey of all his residual rights on half a virgate of land in Inkpen (**287**). This was given in free alms and followed the gift of the land itself to the abbey by Geoffrey's father, John, most probably during the time of Abbess Matilda. The Maunsel family were well established in Inkpen by the twelfth century.[59]

Similarly the donation of land and appurtenances in Wyke and East Aston by Ralph Falconer, steward of Wherwell around 1245 (**204**) was an act of piety.[60] It seems likely that Wyke, a tithing in the present parish of St. Mary Bourne, was in fact a part of the abbey's original endowment. The abbey was certainly in a position to make many grants to its most prominent officials from its holdings in Wyke, thus not only did Ralph Falconer himself hold land there, as steward, but also Walerand the cook and successive members of the Forester family, who were granted the mill.[61] Forton might also have lain inside the original endowment, but nowhere is this spelt out clearly. The hamlet lies just downriver from Middleton. A sale of land to the abbey by John of St. Valery 1259-62 is recorded in **25-8**.

It is difficult to summarise the extent and value of the property acquired by the abbey during the years of Euphemia. There were certainly rents to the value of £2. 7s. 4d., but it is harder to quantify the value of 'a messuage with appurtenances' in

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58 The Forester family will be discussed at length in Chapter 4.4. below.

59 Hunt (1997) 59. Two charters belonging to the second quarter of the 13th.c. concerning Inkpen property, **36** and **37**, were witnessed by a Walter Maunsel.

60 Associated documents are **122** and **124.** For more on this gift, see Chapter 4.7 below.

Wherwell, or the 'lands in Wydewell,' the '2 messuages and curtilages,' or indeed the value of 'ten acres in Wherwell.' However, the vigour with which Euphemia renovated the abbey's manors and buildings (**59**) all point to the ongoing success of the refoundation under Abbess Matilda and the outstanding management skills of her niece.[62] The relatively modest additions to the abbey's local holdings made during Euphemia's time, suggest that not many local families actually donated lands through piety, rather what additions there were, were bought. With the better documented landholdings, there are strong grounds for thinking that the personal difficulties of some of the local families made this possible. These circumstances are the subject for a special section in Chapter 4.5.

As far as we know, the second half of the thirteenth century saw comparatively little in the way of extra grants. In fact there were later accusations of negligence relating to the abbey's management during these years.[63] Abbess Constance (1259-62) had only two and a half years as abbess. It was then that John of St. Valery handed over the lands in Forton to the abbey, being those which had hitherto been held by Walter Erkebande of Andover (**25**). The twenty years of Abbess Mabel de Tichburne's rule (1262-1281), did however, see some additions, for instance there are two charters recording gifts of 2 and 8 acres of land in Bullington, given to Abbess Mabel, God and the church at Wherwell, in free alms, by Robert of Brightmarston (392-3).[64] More spectacular was the gift in free alms to the Abbess Mabel and the convent of all the land that William of Anne held in the vill from the

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61 **118,122,125,174,202,204,S29.**

62 See particularly Euphemia's obituary (**59**), and Chapter 4.1. below.

63 See **294** and Chapter 3.9 below.

64 Probably Robert *Brightmarston* was identical with the Robert *Brimarton* to whom William de Bullington sold his 8 acres, see **385**, and above.

abbey, with all rents and appurtenances, roads, paths meadows and pastures etc. Apparently this represented the surrender of a substantial holding (**13**). The property was probably taken in hand as there are no other documents in the cartulary relating to them. There were also gains made in Somerset from a holding held by William of Wooley (**236**), but the extent of the tenement is not specified. Of lesser significance was the gift by Robert Payn (*de Hunindon dictus Payn*) of an annual rent of 18d. from a tenement in Bullington to Abbess Mabel de Tichburne (391).

3.4. Expansion of the fourteenth century

In the fourteenth century Wherwell had the good fortune to have a third abbess who, in the tradition of Matilda and Euphemia, ruled for nearly forty years: Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298 - 1333). It was during her period of office that the abbey continued to make acquisitions, such as the virgate of land in Bullington which had previously been in the hands of Thomas Pagan (**171,175**). By far the most spectacular gains made during Isabella's long period in office, were alienations made under the terms of the Statute of Mortmain of 1279, after which an individual was not allowed to give land to a religious house without a special licence, the fee for which was payable to the king. With *magister* Henry le Wayte, the rector of Goodworth since 1309, as her nominee, Isabella successfully enabled the abbey to gain substantial lands during the first half of the century.

The earliest of these acquisitions was 1 messuage, 40 acres of arable land and 5 acres of meadow with appurtenances in Bathwick, Somerset for which Roger le Forester had acquired a licence to alienate. This was in August 1311 (**111,114;** cf.

364,110).[65] Then, in December 1314, a licence was acquired by Henry le Wayte and Laurence of Overton to alienate 1 messuage, 20 acres of arable and 1 acre of meadow, also in Bathwick. (**81**; cf. **82,114**).[66]

A year later Henry le Wayte acquired another licence to alienate land to the abbey, this time 1 messuage, 50 acres of arable, 4 acres meadow and 16s. rent in West Bullington (**76**; cf.**77,114,115,116,120,121**).[67] Another large holding was the subject of complex dealings in 1323; once more Henry le Wayte was in charge of the proceedings, and he acquired, at this time, a licence to alienate 1 messuage, 1 mill, 15 acres of arable, 2 acres of meadow and appurtenances in Toppemille, Tufton (92; cf. **130**,133,**150,152-156**). Henry le Wayte acquired yet another licence in 1325 to alienate 66 acres or arable, and 5 acres of marsh in Goodworth, Wherwell and East Aston (**83**). The documents charting the history and extent of these lands and appurtenances start in 1312, when Ralph Paulin exhanged them for property held by John Bokelonde in Buckinghamshire (**198**). The remaining charters are 84 and **85**.

The use of nominees was fashionable in the fourteenth century, and it is notable that Wherwell was in the forefront of this movement, which probably originated in the schools. Barbara Harvey, in her study of the lands of Westminster Abbey, dates the start of this practice to around 1314.[68] This is the exact year in which Henry le Wayte first acquired a licence in his capacity as nominee (**81**).

The negotiations culminating in these alienations were often extraordinarily complex, and demanded a high degree of trust in the nominee. The care taken to

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65 *CPR 1338-40*, 335. This is a 1339 exemplification of the licence following the loss of the original documents. The Forester family is the subject of a special focus in Chapter 4.4 below.

66 *CPR 1313-17*, 200

67 *ibid*, 303.

include all the deeds relating to the given property shows up in the documents which were deposited at the abbey, and copied faithfully into the cartulary. For the abbey's acquisition of various lands and tenements in Sutton Scotney, also made through the agency of Henry le Wayte in 1330/1, there are 17 documents (**74,106,**126,**131,135-8, 141,285,341,344,370**). Also relevant to this alienation are documents referring to land in Wherwell and Bullington which passed from John Godwyn to Henry le Wayte (**123-5,138,450,S18**). The series culminates in the final acquisition of the licence, which shows that the total amount of property involved was 9 messuages, 200 acres of land and 10 acres of meadow (**73**). This occurred following the death of Roger Forester (**131,135-6**).[69]

Thus by the time Isabella de Wyntreshulle resigned as abbess in 1333, she had seen the abbey increase its holdings by not less than 11 messuages, 400 acres of arable land, and 22 acres of meadow, with various extra appurtenances and rents. These figures do not include the last major acquisition recorded in the cartulary; this was a property, amounting to 3 messuages, a mill, 64 acres of arable and 10 acres of meadow, which had hitherto been held by William *atte Mulle* of Middleton, for which the abbey's new agents, Richard Deneby, William of Malmesbury, and John Wake managed to acquire a licence to alienate in 1364 (**330**). There are 15 documents which support this complex change of land ownership (**301-308,324-329**), and the negotiations and dealings all took place during 1363 and 1364, when Joanna Cokerell (1361-1375) was abbess. The final extent of the fourteenth-century expansion was

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[68] B. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates* (Oxford, 1977), 183. The subject is also discussed at length by S. Raban in 'Mortmain in Medieval England,' *P&P* (1974), 11-12.

[69] See Chapter 5.4. below.

therefore a little over 14 messuages, 475 acres of arable land, and 32 acres of meadow.

The last recorded gift to the abbey was made in 1436. At the cost of 100s., the reversion of 7 messuages, 405 acres of arable land, 10 acres of woodland and 140 acres of pasture in Botley and Mattockesford was granted to the abbey following the death of Margery Benet.[70] There is no reference to these lands in the cartulary.

3.5. The nature of the abbey's lands

Wherwell, and the principal manors which the abbey held, which were Wherwell itself, Middleton, Goodworth, Bullington, Anne and Tufton, were all within a few miles of each other. They enjoyed prime positions on the rich meadow lands of the River Test and its tributaries. The higher land provided arable, and beyond this, grazing on the thin chalk uplands.

Arable land is frequently specified in the charters, and by the thirteenth century all the vills clearly operated an open field system of land distribution and husbandry, with peasants holding strips of several acres within the larger open fields, as described, for example, in **34, 86** and **381.** The remnants of this strip system were still evident in the middle of the eighteenth century, as is shown on surviving tithe maps (Part II, Fig.11). As in much of Wessex, there was a strong contrast between the value of the meadows, which provided valuable hay and grazing, and the arable land which was of poor quality and vulnerable to soil impoverishment, especially if

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70 *CPR 1429-1436*, 501.

adequate manuring was not carried out.[71] Postan contrasts the values for arable and meadow lands as 2d. and 2s. respectively. Successful managment of the arable lands could only be achieved by grazing the sheep on the downlands by day and bringing them down onto the arable by night. In addition to this, the land would need to be left fallow every other year, during which time the sheep would be free to graze, thus providing the land with the vital manure. This two field system was extensively used on the demesne lands of some of the best run estates in the area, such as that of Monxton just west of Andover, which was held by the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin.[72] The likelihood is that this was used at Wherwell as well. The agricultural practice, economic conditions and social life of this area of north west Hampshire were all influenced by the extensive institutional holdings of the church. In addition to Bec-Hellouin, Hyde Abbey, Romsey Abbey, and Mottisfont Priory, St. Mary's Abbey and St. Swithun's Priory in Winchester, all held lands in the vicinity of Wherwell. Those of St. Swithun's probably provide the closest parallel to Wherwell. Their manor of Chilbolton lay just across the river from Wherwell, and its surviving rental, custumal, *compotus* and manor court rolls reflect the shared values and economic problems of these neighbouring communities.[73] However, by far the most prominent landlord in the area was the bishop of Winchester, and the Pipe Rolls of the bishopric reveal not only the agricultural practices of the period, but the times of dearth and plenty.[74] Wherwell Abbey's only surviving account roll is for the 70-day period following the death of Abbess Elena de Percy on December 2nd. 1297, during which John of

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71 M.M. Postan ed. *Cambridge Economic History of Europe I* (Cambridge, 1941), 554, 559. See also J. Hare, 'Agricultural and rural settlement in the chalklands of Wiltshire and Hampshire c. 1200-1500,' in *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex* ed. M. Aston & C. Lewis (Oxford, 1994), 159.

72 D.K. Coldicott, *Monxton* (Andover, 1998), 13.

73 *The Manor of Chilbolton 1284-1433,* ed. & trans. J.S. Drew. IHR typescript (1945).

London of Alton took custody of the temporalities (Part II, Fig.12). The following extract reflects the abbey's income for these two winter months:

Receipts for the manor of Wherwell

Rents (including rents from Clatford).....70s.
Payment [in lieu] of works by 48 customary tenants who owe 2 days per week @ half a penny per day, less customary 2 days off for Christmas....36s.
Sale of 50 acres of underwood @ 2s. per acre.....100s
Sale of pasture for 700 sheep @ 4d. per week per 100 sheep.....23s. 4d.
Sale of half a quarter of grain from the mill .....3s.
Sale of 5 bushells of mixtel from the same mill..... .2s.
Pleas and perquisites from the court..... ...8s. 6d.
Investigations on behalf of customary tenants.....20s
Total: £13 2s. 10d.

The entries for all the other manors are in the same vein, and reveal a similar source of income, giving a grand total of £30 17s. 7 ½d.

In all cases the amount from the sale of brushwood stands out as being particularly lucrative, exceeding the amount gained from rents by a large margin, and for these particular seventy days representing 25% of its income. Wherwell abbey held plentiful woodlands, the most important of which was Harewood Forest which lay wholly within Wherwell Hundred and was primarily oak woodland with hazel coppice.[75] At the time of the dissolution it amounted to 600 acres; the adjacent Upping Copse provided an additional 220 acres, making a total of just over 820 acres.[76] In addition to Harewood forest the abbey's documents make reference to the woodlands of Stonehanger, Anne and Eastover. These copses survive today and border the villages of Anne and Clatford. The account roll shows that the manors of Compton in Berkshire, Bathwick and Wooley in Somerset, and Ashey on the Isle of Wight also yielded a good income from the sale of brushwood, being £4. 6s. 8d. and

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74 *Pipe Winch. 1301-2* (1996); *1409-10* (1999).
75 See Part II, Figs. 1 & 21.
76 *Monasticon II*, 640.

40s. respectively. The underwood was sold, not by the cart load, but by the acre, in common with brushwood on the bishop of Winchester's estates; this practice of selling by the acre was general practice for estates with woodlands which did not have markets close at hand, as the increase in transport costs for marketing further afield reduced profitability and discouraged lords from exploiting their woodlands directly.[77] Thus the right to harvest the brushwood in Wherwell's woodland was bought by the abbey's tenants at 2s. an acre; they gathered and bundled the brushwood themselves, selling it, in all probability, to local businesses and householders.

Another crucial part of the rural economy and of the landscape of the Test Valley, was the milling activity. At the time of Domesday there were three mills in Wherwell, worth 27s. 6d; two at Tufton worth 35s., two in Anne worth 30s., one at Bullington, worth 15s., and two at Middleton.[78] None are recorded at Goodworth or Forton. One of the mills at Wherwell was reconstructed by Abbess Euphemia (**59**).

163 and **170** describe the leasing of one of the Middleton mills by the abbess in two halves, one lease being for the northern side and the other the southern. Probably this was the site of the present day Lower Mill, which actually has a 'Southside Farm' half a kilometre to the south. There are two possible references to the old Upper Mill mill at East Aston. It may have been the mill called *Toppemulle* which is specified in several documents, suggesting a deliberate contrast to Middleton's Lower Mill. However it is perhaps more likely that *Toppemulle* was one of the mills at Tufton (**92,93,154,155**), as in **93** it is described as being *iuxta*

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77 J.A. Galloway, D. Keene & M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region 1290-1400,' in *EcHR*, XLIX (1996), 449-453.

78 *DB*, 15-17.

Tokyngton. The issue is confused by the fact that Middleton does not officially exist as a separate parish today. It was combined with East Aston to make the village of Longparish sometime in the sixteenth century, and the two hamlets have been known as Longparish ever since.

Perhaps, then the Upper Mill at East Aston might be the site of the mill called Knightbridge specified in later records.[79] There was a family called *Knytebrugge* who frequently witnessed Middleton charters who were presumably from there. The principal members of the family were Adam and Baldwin *de Knytebrugge* and Adam, son of Adam *de Knytebrugge*. Adam *de Knytebrugge* was witness to several documents in the long series recording the change of hands of William *atte Mulle's* very substantial tenements in Middleton which included 'two virgates of land and a water mill in Middleton, together with gardens curtilages, paths, ditches, meadows, pastures, waters, woods and all other appurtenances' (**307**).[80] We cannot know for certain which property this referred to, but his name *atte Mulle* is suggestive of him being a miller.

There are also several documents relating to the two mills in Bullington, demonstrating that milling activity had expanded since the time of Domesday. The miller, Alexander de Bullington probably had the mill at West Bullington, as the one at East Bullington was demised to Alan of Sutton in 1280 (88), having been previously held by John of St. Valery (218). In the fourteenth century, the mill at West Bullington was leased out to St. Elizabeth's College, Winchester, for 12s. *per annum* (300, 463).

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[79] *Monasticon II*, 642. The Abstract of Roll, 33 Henry VIII. Augmentation office, re-printed in *Monasticon* records there is a mill called Knightbridge in East Aston in the parish of Middleton, 643.

[80] The series covers **302-308,** and **324-330.**

In addition to these principal mills belonging to the abbey, there are references to mills at Goodworth (**167**) (Little) Ann (**14**) and Forton (**38**). There was also a mill in the hamlet of Wyke, let to the Forester family prior to the third quarter of the thirteenth century (**438**).

The suitability of the river for the placing of mills for the grinding of corn, was of course, one of the reasons why the valley was such an attractive site for development in Anglo-Saxon times; indeed Barry Cuncliffe's recent archaelogical excavations have shown that a mill was part of the appurtenances of a magnificent villa situated at Fullerton in Roman times; how many mills existed along the Test valley at this time is uncertain.[81]

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries other economic advantages were seized upon. Since the conquest, Winchester and Andover had built up pre-eminence in the cloth trade, taking advantage of the suitability of the countryside for sheep rearing, and Hampshire's access to the continent through the port of Southampton. Many of the crafts associated with the production of finished cloth, carding, spinning, weaving and fulling were undertaken by workers centred in the towns. Around 1200 possibilities were snatched for mechanising the fulling process through the construction of specially adapted mills. These were called *molendina fullerica.* They allowed the cloth to be compressed, cleaned and hung much more easily, whereas previously it had been beaten by hand and foot. It is of interest, therefore, that the presence of fulling mills is recorded in the Wherwell cartulary, albeit somewhat later. In 1328, when the Abbess leased out the fulling mill at Middleton

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81 Barry Cuncliffe, 'Interim report. Fullerton 2001,' issued by The Institute of Archaeology, Oxford. David Allen, of Andover Museum, kindly provided a copy of this report.

(**163,**170), the charters specify both a 'new rack' and an 'old rack.' The rack was the construction on which the heavy wet cloth was hung up on tenter hooks to dry.[82] This is both a reminder of the unique processes that fulling involved and of the fact that if there was already an old rack in 1328, the process must have started at Fullerton a good deal earlier, perhaps in the thirteenth century.

In 1320 the abbess of Wherwell also sold a plot for the building of another fulling mill next to the bridge between Goodworth and Clatford (**167**). The impression is that the River Test around Wherwell was being fully exploited for the development of the fulling industry by 1300. Whether it constituted part of a serious drift to the countryside of these craft workers to the detriment of Winchester city and Andover as suggested by Carus-Wilson, is hard to judge.[83] Wherwell owned its own mill in Winchester, which it let out at farm for £4 *per annum* in 1296 (425), and there are several charters in the cartulary relating to this mill, which was situated just outside the east gate.[84] The rent of £4 was considerably more than that which the abbess charged for the Middleton mill, whose two halves were let at 13s. 4d. each (**163,**170). The extent of the mills around Wherwell certainly suggest that the artisan monopolies of the towns were being broken by entrepreneurs who had found cheaper labour in the countryside, and the millers stand out as being men of substance and authority, indeed as men of wealth, equalled by few others in the cartulary. The presence of known Andover merchants such as John Ponyngton and several of the Spyrecock family in documents in the Wherwell cartulary demonstrates merchant interest in the area, and the family names of *Flanders, Flemming* and *Flegham* as

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82 *VCH Hants V,* 475-482 gives a detailed account of the textile industry in Hampshire during these years.

83 E.M. Carus-Wilson, 'An industrial revolution of the 13th.c.' in *EcHR* 1st. series (1941).

found in the cartulary, suggests a continental and Flemish immigrant presence traditionally associated with the textile industry.[85] Economic historians have noted that the decline in the prosperity of Winchester became obvious by around 1300, just the time when Wherwell's mills in the Test Valley show up in the sources.[86]

3.6. Patterns of tenure

The Wherwell evidence suggests that by the thirteenth century the status of the men holding land at Wherwell had changed considerably. In the Domesday survey Wherwell was said to have 5 villeins, 12 bordars, 25 cottars and 10 serfs. There were no freemen or soke men mentioned. The Account Roll of 1297, however, offers a completely different picture of Wherwell.[87] There were now numerous free tenants, (unfortunately the number is not specified), giving the abbey a rental income of 70s. for just a 70 day period; in the same vill there were 48 customary tenants. Their status had been assured by Henry II's legal reforms which granted protection in the royal court for those who had won or bought the freehold of the land they now farmed.[88] The total income of rents from the free tenants in all the manors held by Wherwell from the 2nd. December 1297 until 9th. February following, (70 days in all) was:

Wherwell & Clatford	70s.	
Goodworth		8d.
Anne	3s.	
Middleton	6s.	8d.
Bullington	*nihil*	
Tufton	*nihil*	
Compton	*nihil*	
Bathwick & Wooley	3s.	

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84 423,425,453,299,437, in chronological order.

85 **75,145-9,**263,286,289,337,**344,**S27.

86 Carus-Wilson (1941), 11; J. Bolton, *Medieval English Economy 1150-1500* (London, 1980), 153-9.

87 PRO SC/6/983/34. Part II, Fig.12.

88 Harvey (1977),106-8.

Ashey 10s.

This table shows that the highest income from free tenant holdings was from the manor of Wherwell itself, presumably from rented out demesne lands. There were either many more free tenants in Wherwell than in the other vills, or the holdings were much bigger. In addition to having many free tenants, the number of customary tenants in Wherwell itself was also very high compared with the other manors. Wherwell had 48 customary tenants; Goodworth 6; Anne 4; Middleton 28; Bullington 9; Tufton 11; Compton 8; Bathwick 17; and Ashey none. Compared with the other vills, Wherwell was a rural metropolis.

It is difficult to calculate how many free tenants had contributed to the high rental income of 70s. at Wherwell. It might be instructive look at the figures for Anne, which returned the smallest rent, a mere 3s. According to Domesday, Anne consisted of three and a half virgates, so the rent of 3s. probably came from this one holding. If that figure is used as a guide, then the 70s. rent from Wherwell would imply the presence of around 23 free tenants, though how many virgates they held is harder to assess. The size of a virgate is also much debated. Nationally it varied enormously but is considered to have been around 40 acres in Wiltshire. Harvey has noted differences on the Abbey of Westminster's estates ranging from 40 acres to 15 acres;[89] Drew discovered that at Chilbolton, just across the river from Wherwell, a *burus* (which is a free peasant), paid 6s. *per annum* for 1 virgate of 22 acres plus a meadow, payable in 4 installments of 18d. each.[90] Although one might think it is better to apply McGurk's definition of a virgate: a useless measurement, representing

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89 *ibid*, 235.

90 Drew (1945), 102.

instead 'a complex of claims and customary obligtions,'[91] the charters in the Wherwell cartulary already referred to regarding lands of Thomas of Bullington and his family, seem to suggest that the standard holding in the Wherwell manors was 28 acres (**379**), so perhaps this represented the amount of land held by a typical virgate-holder in Wherwell, if not the size of the virgate itself. When family holdings got divided, as happened in Bullington, they were split up into 14 acre holdings, which was probably the standard half-virgate (**381,397**). These charters also show how the virgates or half virgates were built up of scattered strips in numerous fields, or rather, furlongs, in the parish; thus we have acres in *Mereforlange, Tokyngewaye, Wellersfelde, Gavellonde, Shortforlange, Brodeforlange,* the *Rygge*, and many others. It was very fortunate that the abbey had been able to take back in hand so much Bullington land. The high number of tenants in Wherwell shows how the free peasantry had succesfully entrenched in the vill, preventing the abbey gaining control of its lands. Repurchasing would surely have been the preferred policy for the abbey, as tenanted land was almost always held in hereditary right; it traditionally gave very poor returns to the chief lord because the rent often remained static for generations.

Until the Statute of *Quia Emptores* in 1290, the problem of static rents was compounded by tenants alienating their lands to whomsoever they pleased, while retaining the rights to profits from the services which might otherwise have been payable to the abbey as chief lord. These tenants waited in the hope of picking up rights of wardship, escheats and so on, in the event of their sub-tenants vacating the land. This legal reservation was often marked by the retention of a nominal 'quaint'

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91 J.J.N. McGurk, *Dictionary of Medieval Terms* (Strawberry Hill Booklet, 1970), 41-2.

rent; in Wherwell's case this was at various times a clove of gillyflower (**363,357**), a pound of cumin (**47**), two pounds of pepper (**287**), a sore sparrow-hawk (**116**), and a rose (**141**). These latter two are of some interest in that the charters are dated 1312 and 1330 repectively, long after the statute of *Quia Emptores* was supposed to have swept away sub-infeudation and restored to the chief lords the right to the reversion of their tenanted land if it became vacant.[92]

The picture the *compotus* roll gives is one of a vigorous free tenantry concentrated in Wherwell itself, with only two or three free tenants existing in Middleton, and virtually none on the other manors. Did the *compotus* really represent the true picture at Bullington, however? Did the large acreage brought back under the abbey's control in Euphemia's time, really leave Bullington without any free tenants? As well as recording no free tenants in 1297, it apparently had only 9 customary tenants - a vastly different picture than that given by the Wherwell figures. So great is the contrast, one wonders whether these figures reflected the true picture.

A glance at **381**, dating from the 1260s, shows up numerous holders of strips in Bullington, who may have been the abbey's customary tenants. Amongst those named are Ralph Bruin, William Alwyn, William Thom, Robert Alan, William Whitying, and Robert Faber. The fourteenth century charters give a different picture. When Henry le Wayte was negotiating the deals which culminated in the alienation of lands in Bullington, he effected an exchange with John Ryngebourne. The Ryngbournes were of much higher status, and held land in Barton Stacy. One would

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[92] A lucid description of the practice of sub-infeudation by mesne lords together with the charging of quaint rents is in *The Register of Godstow Nunnery*, ed. A. Clark (London, 1911), xli-ii.

expect his Bullington land to be held freely too, but this was not reflected on the *compotus* roll entry.[93] Furthermore, in 1312 a case was heard at Westminster between Gilbert Thorne, citizen of London, querent, and Ralph Visdelu and his wife, deforciants, concerning the rights to a moiety of a messuage, 60 acres of arable, 8 acres of meadow and 16s. rent in West Bullington (**116**). Only freemen were able to seek justice in the royal courts, so one must assume that Gilbert Thorne was one such man, in which case Bullington was not just a backwater inhabited by a few customary tenants, but a sought-after investment enjoyed by a citizen of London. The documents associated with this man, therefore open a new door on the landholders in Bullington. We do not know the association, but on Gilbert's death in 1314, his brother, William Wymbush, gave the land to Richard le Wayte, and his heirs and assigns in perpetuity (**120**). Richard was a significant member of an important local family, and a brother of Henry le Wayte, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.3., below. His possession of the property was disputed by a Walter Tury and his wife, other Bullington landholders who spring from nowhere, who claimed the moiety themselves, but Richard le Wayte's claim held (**115**). Richard was to hold the land of the chief lords of the fee in perpetuity; presumably these lords were the abbess and convent of Wherwell.

Richard le Wayte's status raises the suspicion that he was already a prominent landholder in Bullington simply on account of being one of the Wayte family.[94] We have already noted that a large amount of land passed through Henry le Wayte's hands to the abbey, some of these his own. The rest was Forester lands. This raises

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93 For evidence of the Ryngebournes holding land in Bullington, see **344**.

94 See Chapter 4.3 below.

the possibility that the Waytes, and perhaps other officials of the abbey, held land in Bullington without the obligation of paying rent, perhaps subletting to the stripholders mentioned in the documents above.[95] The Foresters, of course, were in the service of the abbey, and so had been several generations of Waytes. Another person who definitively held land in Bullington because of his service to the abbey, was Robert of Sutton, together with his heirs and assigns; he held a virgate there for a rent of 12s. *per annum* (**89**). If this points to many virgates in Bullington being held by officials of the abbey and their descendents, for little or not rent, it may also show how the pressure of patronage depressed the abbey's return on its lands. Before leaving the question of Bullington, it is perhaps significant that by the much later date of 1493, thirteen virgaters are recorded at Bullington.[96]

In summary then, the lack of rent-paying tenants recorded in Bullington might have been because so much land there was held by officials of the abbey; alternatively, the *compotus* roll might be inaccurate or reflect some simple, or complex, accounting irregularity, or the fact that rents were collected on different terms in Wherwell compared with Bullington, which would give a false impression of the balance and number of tenants.

The mixed success that the abbey achieved in gaining satisfactory rents from its tenants was counterbalanced, to some extent, by a few lucky acquisitions, but as noted in Chapter 3.3, these were often achieved only because a donor granted his land in exchange for a corrody. There are four examples of corrodies granted in the Wherwell cartulary (**18,139,378** and **400**). Three belong to the middle of the

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[95] Reference has already been made to the Foresters being granted lands in Wyke. The practice of granting free holdings to administrative staff was fairly widespread. E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1969), 124.

thirteenth century. The first one details the corrody granted to John son of Ralph (**18**). The corrody was for the rations of a chaplain and a dish from the kitchen each day for John and his wife, for life, in exhange for which John parted with 10 acres of arable and 5s. of rent. Thomas of Bullington's corrody was similar (**378**). He, too, was granted an allowance for life comparable to that enjoyed by a chaplain, and the chirograph spells the conditions out in more detail. The rations amounted to a daily dish from the kitchen, together with a loaf of bread and eleven gallons of ale per week, half of which was to be 'conventual ale', the other half of the quality given to the servants. He also had 6s. 8d. per year for clothing. His wife Annora was entitled to the same, less half the allowance of ale. For this, Thomas and Annora quitclaimed all rights that they had on a virgate with messuage and appurtenances in Bullington. John Iuvenis, however, was granted a pittance of 6s. a year for clothes and footwear, and a dish from the kitchen such as was due to the baker or brewer. He was expected to give service to the abbey on pain of punishment from the steward, though he was excused carting duties. The amount of land that John conceded is not spelt out, but it amounted to all the land that he had in Bullington (**400**).

There is a fourteenth-century charter in the cartulary which is of a slightly different nature (**139**); in it, William Forester, brother of Roger Forester, is able to enjoy two loaves of white bread from the convent, a whole meal loaf, 2 measures of conventual ale, a daily dish from the kitchen, a 16s. 8d. allowance for clothing a year; two loads of brushwood, and straw for his marital bed. William's wife was granted only 6s. 8d. for clothing, but apart from the usual lesser ration of ale, she was to enjoy similar benefits to William. Where this differs from the thirteenth-century

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[96] f.222.

documents, is that they were granted a cottage and four acres of land, and grazing for a cow, as well as two pigs quit of pannage, so that it was not really a typical corrody, but one granted under special circumstances. As the Forester family were notable office holders and benefactors of the abbey, it might be that William and his wife Cecilia were expecially rewarded on account of so much Forester land being taken back by the abbey.

There is some suspicion that in cases where there were other family members, the donation of lands in return for corrodies was to the serious detriment of the donor's family. In the case of John Iuvenis's corrody, he did indeed have a brother, but there was a clause in the chyrograph stating that if the brother bought the land back, then the abbey would be held to nothing. The possibility of a return of the land to the family is envisaged - at a price. There seems no particular need, however, to imply that Wherwell was exploiting its tenants in this regard. Whether this was the only reason for the efficacy of corrodies to be questioned is another matter. Ottobuono, who was appointed Papal Legate 1265, deplored the sale of corrodies, because he judged that food and clothing that would otherwise be given to the poor were being diverted to the comparatively privileged.[97] Wherwell's document **94**, dated 1293, describes how Abbess Elena granted a corrody, equal to that of a nun, to Amicia, daughter of Roger of Dunstable, together with an annual allowance of 8s. for clothing. Amicia did not have to be a full-time resident of the convent, though she was to be ensured a room in the abbey for the rest of her life. The document goes on to say that Amicia, or her father, paid £20 for this privilege,

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[97] Ottobuono's comments are highlighted in B. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100-1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993), 180-197. She discusses the issue of corrodies carefully. It

and furthermore, that she had to provide 24s. annual rent to the abbey. In this sense, it does represent a sale, but it is not necessarily obvious that it was to the detriment of the convent. It would seem that both parties could have benefited from this deal; whether this had a detrimental effect on the poor is harder to assess.[98] There is certainly not enough evidence to suggest that the abbey actually campaigned to buy in alienated land through the granting of corrodies. A small proportion had to give up their lands and were only too pleased to be sheltered by the abbey in exchange, meanwhile the abbey was now able to enjoy better returns by either farming the land itself, or letting the land out again on more favourable terms, and there is no doubt that lords were feeling the pinch by the end of the thirteenth century.

The large number of free tenantry at Wherwell is indicative of changes in the management of the abbey's lands. By definition, free tenants had never been obliged to perform the statutory two to two and a half days labour-service every week, which was the burden of the customary tenants, although sometimes they were expected to provide occasional service, such as ploughing, carting, haymaking and harvesting.[99] Thus as more tenants gained or bought their freedom, the abbey's rental income increased, but it became increasingly dependent on a dwindling band of customary tenants, and on hired labour, for working its lands.

The usual source of understanding about the customary tenants comes from custumaries and manorial records, and none survive from Wherwell. Typically a customary tenant would have to provide a long list of services throughout the year, such as ploughing, harrowing, thatching, haymaking, reaping, threshing, sheep

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maybe that Ottobuono was particularly concerned about the corrodies being paid out to royal servants at the bequest of the king, a slightly different concern.

[98] See Chapter 4.6 below.

sheering, ditching and such like. It was this burden of service which distinguished him most clearly from the free tenant, together with his lack of right to litigate in defence of his land in a royal court. A customary tenant would have to pay a small rent for his small-holding and he would also be obliged to pay rents in kind such as eggs and live fowl, as well as the usual burdens of entry fines, tallage, heriots, merchet, pannage charges and so on.[100] It seems that the customary tenants who feature in Wherwell's *compotus* roll were, even in the 1290s, having their labour services commuted to cash payments, though it is unlikely that they were freed from all the burdensome customary duties and exactions; it may be that commutation was the general pattern in the winter months, when less labour was needed. The two day Christmas break was clearly already established.

With regard to commutation of labour, the last folio of the Wherwell cartulary has a list of the charges made for the commutation of boon services (*precaria*) due to the abbey in the autumn of 1493. (f.222) (Part II, Fig. 13). It is possible that these boon services were not the laborious weekly services still performed by customary tenants, but services paid by virgate holders at the peak periods of the farming year. The rate given is 3d. per virgate, payable in the autumn. East Aston and West Aston each had 10 virgaters, Forton 5, Bullington 13, Anne 1, and [Goodworth] Clatford 5. No tenants are mentioned for Wherwell itself, which might have meant that the whole vill was held in demesne, but more likely indicates that an entire folio is missing. The failure to mention Middleton suggests that it was more commonly known at this

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[99] Miller (1969), 114-4. Harvey (1977), 107-8.

[100] Postan (1941), 508ff; 603ff. E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural society and economic change, 1086-1348* (New York, 1978), 120. Bolton (1980), 14-18. C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980), 103-105. Harvey (1977), 203-276.

time as East and West Aston. The only tenant in Anne paid 15d. It is not certain when these commutations of boon work became widespread. The abbey did not loose out entirely as it was able to take the cash payment in *lieu* of work; however the precious labour was lost.

It is not always so easy to understand the different gradations in status of the land holders in the Wherwell sources. Any man who was unfree or held his land by villein tenure suffered burdens, even if he was a well-to-do peasant who held a virgate or more land; thus we have William *de Toppemulle*, father of Henry, holding a virgate of land in Tufton in villeinage (**150**); this is one of the very few documents in the cartulary to actually use the phrase *in villenagio.* Two documents claim to give men their freedom through charters of manusmission. In **247,** around the year 1250, Richard *de la Bere*,[101] executor of Simon Walerand, gave (*concessi et dedi*) Abbess Euphemia a man called Robert Trent; according to the text Robert and and his household were thereby to be freed from all servile conditions in perpetuity. It is not clear how the granting of this freedom by Richard *de la Bere* went hand in hand with Robert Trent's new condition of service to the abbess; perhaps he was merely to be free of Simon Walerand and his executors; it is possible he was in fact sold to the abbess, though no price is mentioned. There is a record of such an occurence in the second document concerning serfdom which also belongs to the thirteenth century; it constitutes not the giving of freedom to a serf, but the sale of a man and this family for money, to the abbey; in it Henry of St. Valery sells three brothers, plus their offspring and all their goods and chattels to Abbess Euphemia for 40s. It dates from

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101 There was a Richard de la Bere who was a steward of Wherwell around 1300, probably immediately preceding Henry le Wayte. See **165**. The Richard of **247**, bearing the same name. was probably his father or even grandfather.

around 1230 (**S32**). Finally there is a much later document, dating from the time of Abbess Cecilia Lavington (1375-1412). The language is similar to the earlier ones, but this time it is the Abbess is who is granting a man his freedom, with the full consent of her chapter: [**D**] f.214. There is no mention of a payment, so *J de B* did not apparently buy his freedom, but rather was given it. This was well past the first crisis of the plague, since when, owing to a sudden acute labour shortage, serfdom might be considered a condition of past times. It is impossible to tell whether these cases were as rare as the documents suggest.

3.7. Management decisions

The record keeping of the abbey prior to the time when Euphemia became abbess, is slight; it is only after 1217 that details begin to emerge in the sources as to how Wherwell managed its estates.

It will be remembered that the abbey did not benefit from many gifts from local people, so when the abbey was fortunate enough to enjoy a gift of land, it is instructive to know what happened to the land. In **205** and **419** we have a chance to see what Euphemia did with the land recently acquired in Bullington. One thing is clear: the decision to lease it out to a new tenant required the advice and consent of the whole convent, and it was unanimously decided that the land, which according to **205** amounted to a hide, should be leased out to Geoffrey Clinge *pro homagio et servicio*. This was an unambiguous sign that the tenant was a free tenant, and as thus, was obliged to pay homage to the abbess. Geoffrey paid an entry fine of 25 marks, the annual rent was to be 20s., and unusually, Geoffrey was obliged to deliver 9d. every year on the feast of St. Thomas to the local sheriff. Another interesting

feature of the details given in **419** is that the document was witnessed not just by the local notables, such as Giles of Bridport, all the local clergy, the local gentry in the shape of Robert of Sutton, Herbert of Calne and so on, but 'by the whole hundred.' This is the only document in the cartulary which conjures up such a picture of a grant being made during the sitting of the Hundred Court.

Granting land on condition that the tenant paid homage and service was something Euphemia was to do again, and the decision was always made by the whole chapter; **89** represents a lease granted to Robert of Sutton of a virgate with appurtenances in East Bullington. He had earned the privilege of holding land on these conditions because he had handled a difficult court case for the abbess.[102] Even when important abbey office holders such as the forester were granted land on account of their service, or status, the consent of the whole convent had to be sought (**118**). Although the granting of these rewards was clearly a vital way of maintaining local support, in the long run it probably cost the abbey dear in terms of revenue. Robert of Sutton and his heirs were to hold the land in perpetuity, and were free to assign it to whomsoever they wished. The rent was 12s. a year, and as well as gaining the land, Robert was to have free pannage for his pigs, and free grazing for the number of livestock customarily permitted on a virgate of land; the grazing rights granted to Thomas Forester at Wyke were equally generous.[103] The Foresters in theory had a life interest only in the property in Wyke, and indeed in the office of forester, but in practice it was hereditary (**228-9,417**).

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[102] The importance of Robert of Sutton and his family will be discussed below in Chapter 4.4.

[103] **118**

There is a later document in the cartulary which makes another award in return for homage and service. This was given, again with the consent of the whole convent, to Hugo of Overton by Abbess Elena de Percy at the end of the thirteenth century (**257**). The rent was 6s. a year; Hugo and his wife were to enjoy a cottage with appurtenances in Wherwell, some free grazing and pannage, and a concession to brew beer, but this lease was for life only. In theory, after the death of Hugo and his wife, the abbey could review the terms on which it let the property.

The leasing of newly acquired property to free tenants was potentially of great benefit to a monastic institution like Wherwell Abbey in that it had a chance to improve the returns on land which might have been held for years without any increase in rent. It is not very clear from the cartulary, how much the abbey was able to use new leases to improve its income. The abbey might have been unfortunate in the case of **288**. This charter is dated 1341, and it represents the leasing out of two messuages and a virgate of land by the abbess and convent which had hitherto been held by Walter Erkebande in Forton. Walter Erkebande had held the office of kitchener at the abbey way back in Abbess Euphemia's time (**27**), as well as the property in Forton, described in **26** as amounting to three messuages, with a great many valuable appurtenances. Walter had sold these to John of St. Valery, and in **25**, John quitclaimed all rights to these to the abbey for which he was paid 70 marks (**28**). A hundred years later, the land in Forton was still remembered as originating with Walter Erkebande when the lease was granted to Nicholas le Wayte and his wife. However, there is no mention whatsoever in **288** of a money rent, though Nicholas is obliged to render to the abbey all the accustomed services 'just as John Ausyn and the tenants of the other messuages and lands are accustomed to.'

This hardly seems to be an advantageous lease as far as the abbey was concerned. It sounds as if the abbey was somewhat tied by tradition, and a desire to appease prominent local families, and therefore was not able to take advantage of vacancies in tenure as it might have wished. There is no indication, incidentally, that the advice and consent of the convent was sought at this time for what was a very valuable lease.

A strictly business-like approach, however, was maintained in the leasing out of the abbey's mills, such as the fulling mill in Middleton in 1328 (**163,**170). There were a considerable number of buildings associated with the mill and the fulling business, and the two tenants, one who hired the buildings on the north side, and the other the south, paid 13s. 4d. each to the abbey *per annum*, but there were also concessions. The new tenants were to enjoy half a load of brushwood each year and some free grazing; the grant of half an oak was probably given in the expectation of them having to undertake regular repairs to the mill. Both these documents were indentures. An indenture was also drawn up when Abbess Isabella leased a plot to John *de Trente* so that he could build a fulling mill next to the bridge at Clatford (**167**). This would suggest that the industry was expanding in the area in the 1320s. As in the case of the Middleton mill, a tree trunk was allocated each year to the tenant for the repair of the mill, 'according to custom.' The rent of 28s. 8d. was 2s. more than that paid at Middleton, perhaps because the Clatford mill was not to be divided, or perhaps because of the quality of the site and the additional house.

The 1320s saw other more complicated leasing arrangements; for instance there are two leases made in favour of Henry *de Toppemulle* by Abbess Isabella de Wyntreshulle (**150, 151**). They are for a cottage with two acres in Tufton, and a virgate with appurtenances in the same village; the leases would seem to be

straightforward enough, with Henry securing accustomed grazing rights for 2. 6d. *per annum* as his villein father had enjoyed, and rendering 10s. to the abbey for the virgate; but within six months Henry *de Toppemulle* had given these lands to Henry le Wayte, who, as the abbess's nominee, had managed to obtain a licence to alienate the property to the abbey (**92,93**). The lease that Henry *de Toppemulle* took from Abbess Isabella looks therefore to have been some sort of short term legal device.

The gift of land in Wyke, near St. Mary Bourne, by the abbey's steward, Ralph Falconer provided the abbey with a chance to lease the land out afresh. Ralph had had a tenant there called Richard Strong, and it was on his demise that Ralph made his gift to the abbey (**204**) In 1316 the land was leased to Roger Caundele, who already held the manor at Wyke, for 9s. *per annum*, and he was to hold this for life (**122**), but four years later it was leased again to Robert Sparrow and his wife Alice, for their joint lives, with the rent unchanged (**174**). This is in spite of the absolutely disastrous years which preceded the change; it looks as if there was no question of the abbey granting concessionary rents in times of hardship. Unfortunately the size of the Wyke tenement is expressed only as *totam terram* or *quadam terram et tenementum*, so it is impossible to estimate how shrewdly the abbey was dealing with this opportunity. Back in the thirteenth century Abbess Euphemia had leased some land with appurtenances in Wyke to William Southenthorpe for one mark *per annum*. The holding was quite substantial, amounting to a tenement with messuage, a house and croft, several strips of two and a half acres, a virgate of meadow, and so on (**S29**). There is an earlier, undated charter, showing that the land was held by Robert and Alice Alfrich on the same terms and for the same rent (**52**).

All the leases mentioned above were indentures or chirographs; the latter in fact was an early form of indenture, cut vertically in a characteristic jagged pattern. In a chirograph the prominently written word CHIROGRAPH was cut through; this type of document was drawn up to mark the leasing of land in Inkpen to Richard *de la Penne* in 1302 (**97**). Indentures and chyrographs were invariably used for the leasing of the abbey's mills. The Indenture was also the favoured device for marking an exchange of properties, and there are several documents in the cartulary marking these, often substantial, deals. It seems, however, that the indenture was not used at Wherwell in the thirteenth century; thus when Abbess Euphemia and Eustace of Gavelacre made an exchange of land between Forton and Compton, there was no indenture (**38**); in contrast, for the four exchanges of the fourteenth century, the indenture is always used: **373** represents an exchange of tenements between the abbey and Peter of Sutton, which had become a cause of dissent on account of the abbess's energetic ditching schemes, which Peter claimed were harming his land. They were some of the old lands of Thomas of Bullington, some of which had eventually been given to the abbey. It is noticeable what greater proportion Peter of Sutton had acquired of these lands: two and a half virgates as opposed to the abbey's two acres. This indenture contains quite a lot of detail regarding grazing concessions, and it in effect marks the settlement of what was clearly a serious and troublesome dispute.

In 1342, Abbess Amicia and the prebend of Goodworth exchanged some land, seemingly for the benefit of the prebend, and an indenture was used to mark the deal (**159**). Another exchange which deserves mention is one made between Peter of Sutton and Henry le Wayte (**344**). A notable feature of this action is that the charter

was drawn up and witnessed at Sutton Scotney, rather than Wherwell, in the presence of the local gentry, probably at the home of Peter of Sutton. There are only two or three other charters in the cartulary which were obviously witnessed at the private residences of the donors.[104] This exchange involved lands which had hitherto belonged to Roger and Annora Forester, for which Henry le Wayte was taking elaborate steps to acquire for the abbey (**73**).

Nearly all the leases mentioned above were made in the fourteenth century, but these seem to represent new opportunities for the abbey, rather than new policies. Leasing had occurred in Euphemia's time, but the documentation survives only for the urban tenements such as those in English Street, Southampton. In the 1220s Euphemia leased these out to Herbert *de Junghon* for 32s. (**33**). A detailed clause was inserted in the lease to cover the eventuality of the payments not being made, and once more it is clear that Euphemia had had to get the consent of the chapter before this arrangement could be made (the wording actually is *de consilio clericorum et servientorum*). When the same tenement was leased out by Abbess Isabella 80 years later, the rent was only 24s. It may be that the ground floor was not included in this particular lease, the reference being only to the four upper storeys (*stagias*) (**75**). It is hard to see otherwise how the rent could have been less. In 1346 the property in English Street again enters the books, this time the abbey had to deal with a defaulting tenant, Roger Waterman, who was bound to pay that same rent of 24s. *per annum* (**158**). His arrears were such that the abbey decided to take possession, but they could only do so by going through nine hearings before the mayor and bailiff of Southampton, at which, on being able to prove that there was substantial rent owing,

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104 **133** was drawn up at Tufton, for instance.

they had to place a stake in the street outside the property in formal recognition that the tenant had failed in his obligation. Only when nine stakes were in place, could the landlord take possession of his property. This was deemed a better system than the one when an aggrieved landlord was allowed to dismember the property in bits around the defaulting tenant in an effort to discomfort him or flush him out. The burgesses of several towns, Winchester, Southampton and Reading amongst them, discontinued this practice because of protests by the landlords that they were diminishing the value of their own properties by pulling them to pieces.[105] It took two years for the procedures *per stachias* to be completed. The abbey finally got possession in March 1248, and a new lease was granted to one of the burgesses of Southampton (**157**).

The abbey was very firm in the case of tenants who defaulted in their rents and services. An example of this is Abbess Euphemia's pursuit of Jordan *de Montibus* to Westminster, for his refusal to recognize that he owed the abbey *consuetudines et servicios* for a tenement with an annual rent of 6s. This was the case where Robert of Sutton represented her (405) and for which he received considerable reward, demonstrating its importance to her. Euphemia also took to court a Walter of Otteworth over a carrucate of land in Chelworth (**407**). The case was heard at Reading and was worth 1 mark *per annum* to the abbey whereas it had previously been only 10s. This document demonstrates that the abbey had something of a struggle in collecting the rent of tenants in distant locations. **407** records the hearing of a case regarding the same property at Guildford in 1279 when Mabel de Tichfield was Abbess. Walter of Ottworth's son was the deforciant and

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105 See *Borough Customs I*, ed. M. Bateson, SS 18 (1904) 302. *VCH Hants V*, 44-5.

Euphemia's battle with his father is recorded because the family had built up arrears over several years, and the previous action was cited.

Wise choice of tenants could be of great benefit in the urban tenements, and this is apparent in the leases granted for the Winchester properties (**164,**169,292-3,408-**9**,420-31,435,445,447). These documents attracted witnesses of the highest urban status, such as Adam *de Cherynton*, John *le Gras*, Laurence of Ann and Roger *de Ingepenne*, who were all at one time mayors of Winchester. The abbey was fortunate in being able to let its premises in Middle Brook Street (*Wonegarestrete*) Winchester to Hugo Black (*Blac*) **164**. Hugo was sometimes known as Hugo Tinctor and sometimes as Huge *atte Quabbe.* He was clearly a wealthy man, holding, according to his will, many tenements with appurtenances, both within and without the city (**176**).[106] Hugo's widow sub-let the Middle Brook Street property, and all this is faithfully recorded in the cartulary (169).

Euphemia's capable approach to management of the abbey's affairs went further than the granting of sound leases. She also succeeded in appropriating the tithes of Inkpen (**259**). Appropriation of tithes was a classic, and much criticised, way of a religious house increasing its income; the procedures were thorough, as is evident when the abbey tried to appropriate the tithes of Wherwell itself (**54-57**). The value of the Inkpen tithes can be deduced from the documents relating to the bitter dispute between the rector of Inkpen and the abbey in the fourteenth century, when the rector claimed he was entitled to take the tithes for himself (**66**). Euphemia had gained permission to appropriate because the destination of the income was

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[106] This is borne out by documents contained in *Southwick I*, I 190; 191; *II*, III 519-20; 522-4; 526. etc.

considered worthy. **259** represents a grant *ad procuracionem locorum infirmarie* from Abbess Euphemia to be raised from the tithes of Inkpen and Fulscot; thus she fully met the conditions laid down by the church, and ensured the future of her infirmary and the long term care of the nuns in her charge.

As would be expected, the cartulary has no evidence to demonstrate the extent or success of the farming of the abbey's demesne lands, in other words, those which they held in hand. Abbess Euphemia took over at Wherwell from her aunt, Matilda, at the time when grain prices were rising, and lords sought to exploit the profitability of their lands by farming them themselves through their bailiffs.[107] It has already been noted that both Matilda and Euphemia succeeded in gaining important licences to assart some of the forested area in Wherwell to increase the amount of land available for cultivation, it is not so obvious, however, that they succeeding in making beneficial leasing arrangements for its long-term tenants. To counterbalance this, a phenomenal effort was made to enhance the efficiency of the home farms by Abbess Euphemia. In her obituary, special mention is made of what seems to be the complete rebuilding of the manor farm at Middleton. Because it was situated on a dry site on the public highway, and spoilt by old and dilapidated buildings, she transferred it to another place and erected new and strong buildings, together with barns (*grancias*) (**59**). She did likewise at Tufton. In both places, one of the chief aims was to make better use of the river, both for irrigation, and for protection from the common hazard of fire. This effort was very different from the work Euphemia instigated at Wherwell itself, which, although extremely ambitious, was mostly confined to

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[107] Bolton (1980), 76. Postan (1941), 509, 582-3, 587. P.D.A Harvey, 'The Pipe Rolls and the adoption of demesne farming,' in *EcHR, 2nd. Series, xxvii* (1974), 345.

improving the buildings within the monastery enclosure, although she did competely rebuild the mill.

The cartulary primarily concerns the abbey's lands which were tenanted, so we cannot expect to glean much about the lands the abbey had in hand from there, and of course the absence of either account rolls, or of any manor court and custumary rolls, means that there is little direct evidence to go by for understanding the success or otherwise of their own farming efforts. There are, however, two unexpected documents included in the last folios of the cartulary which concern the abbey's demesne lands. The documents were added to the cartulary around 1481/2 by William Palmer, rector of Everleigh, who acted as 'receiver' for the Abbey.[108] Unfortunately his distinctive scrawly handwriting is extremely difficult to read, but he set out to compare the acreage that the abbey had in hand in the thirteenth century with that of his own day. The early survey, he says, was taken from the custumary of Henry le Wayte, steward of abbess Euphemia in the fourth year of his office. The fields are described in detail in Latin (f. 218v.-219),[109] but are almost illegible, making it extremely difficult to compute the acreage; however, it would seem to be around 264 acres excluding headlands.

The extent of the holdings for 1491 is equally difficult to decipher, although it is written in English (f.220v.-221) Palmer notes that his record is based on verbal statements made by two old men who had for sixty years or more, been bailiffs of Barton Stacey. A typical entry is as follows:

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[108] A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford, III* (Oxford, 1957) notes that a William Palmer, a Winchester scholar was admitted to New College in 1464. He was ordained in 1468. Thereafter his career was undistinguised, having failed to earn a place in either Le Neve or Jones. He clearly had a part to play at Wherwell, however.

[109] Because of the extreme difficulty in reading the text, it has not been calendared.

.iij. acres that strechyth a pon the hy way on the west syde of the buttes. Item in Oxynfolde .vij. acres. Item .ix. acres that strecyth a pon Oxenfolde in the este syde etc. (f.220v).[110]

Whereas it might be possible to laboriously work through the entries to add up the acreage, and compare it with the Wayte document, unfortunately frequent descriptions like *all the londes from the style at Uppyn gate,* render a proper calculation impossible. In addition, on one issue, William Palmer was definitely wrong. He was confused by there being two men by the name of Wayte who were stewards of the abbey. The custumal that he described must have been made by Henry le Wayte who was steward at the beginning of the fourteenth century, whereas the Wayte who was steward in Euphemia's time was a Thomas Wayte.[111] The later date is definitely correct because some of the lands are referred to as lying alongside those of Roger Forester, who was contemporary with Henry Wayte, not Thomas. This custumal therefore reflected the demesne lands held by the abbey in the time of Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333) not Abbess Euphemia (1213-1257). It was William Palmer who had made a note of *nomina diversorum tenentium* who held lands of the abbey in 1495 and who were charged for the commutation of their boon services (f.222).[112] The occasion for this burst of efficiency by William Palmer was probably the resignation of Juliana Overey (1452-1494) after 40 years as Abbess. It can be seen from all this, that although the cartulary has offered up a few snippets of insight into the abbey's demesne lands, few conclusions can be reached about the abbey's management practices based on such slight evidence.

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110 Likewise, not calendared..

111 The Waytes are the subject of a whole section of this thesis. See Chapt.4.3 below.

112 This entry has been discussed more fully in Chapter 3.6. above.

3.8. Privileges

Although no records survive showing the management practices of the abbey, the Wherwell's one surviving Account Roll, for 1297, provides a reminder of the importance of the manorial court from which the abbey enjoyed considerable income. The profits arising from the 'pleas and perquisites of the court' for that short period of time amounted to 8s. 6d. from Wherwell, 11d. from Compton, 3s. 4d. from Bathwick and Wooley, and 5s. 9d. from Ashey, totalling 18s. 4d. No figures are included for cases heard at Middleton, Tufton, Bullington or Anne; probably there were no hearings in these vills. This figure is outstripped several times over by the amount the abbey was able to charge for investigations and settlements (*recognitiones*). The figures for these were: Wherwell, 20s.; Goodworth, 3s. 4d.; Anne, 3. 4d.; Middleton, 26s. 8d.; Bullington, 10s.; Tufton, 6s. 8d.; Compton, 13s. 4d.; Bathwick and Wooley, 20s.; Ashey, 20s. The total being £5. 13. 4d. for recognisances made in just this two-month period.

According to the Eyre Rolls, Wherwell itself at some point also acquired the status of a liberty, in that it held the whole hundred, as agent of the king. At the 1279/80 Eyre, the Wherwell hundred's jury of presentment claimed the following:

> *The jury present that the hundred is the hundred of the Abbess of Wherwell, and in that hundred she claims to have gallows, assize of bread and ale, view of frankpledge, infangantheof and outfangantheof, penalties for transgressions of weights and measures, and she does not know by what warrant.*[113]

The right to take profits from the above was properly the prerogative of the abbess as lord of the hundred,[114] but the procedures of taking the profits of justice from manor

and hundred were not always easy to distinguish; this was because the holding of the lordship of the manor often coincided with the holding of the lordship of the hundred, hence the special clause in the *Quo Warranto* enquiry asking whether the hundred was an appurtenance of a given manor.[115] The point of the enquiry was to ascertain whether lords had appropriated suits, customs and services to themselves, without the king's authority. The abbess could, and did, make unlawful claims to the profits of justice, for instance at one of the hearings the abbess was fined for raising a gallows at Compton in Berkshire in 1273, without justification and without licence.[116]

The confusion of jurisdictions may have arisen because the old Anglo-Saxon hundred had origially been grouped round a royal manor, and customs had been set up without written records to back them. Wherwell may have been operating as a franchisal hundred since Anglo-Saxon times, but clear evidence is lacking, indeed it is doubtful whether any true franchisal hundreds existed before the conquest.[117] Ethelred's diploma granted jurisdiction over all the appurtenances, including fields, woods, pastures, meadows, etc. (**1**). Henry II conceded *tholoneum et passagium et omnem consuetudinem* (**2**). The charter granted to the abbey by King John in 1207 seems to represent the more definitive gift of a franchisal hundred, but John claims he is conceding and confirming these privileges (**2**). Were they already held by Wherwell abbey following grants of his predecessors ?

John spells out for the first time the abbey's right to be quit in perpetuity of shires and hundreds and suits of shires and hundreds, sheriffs aids, and pleas and

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113 PRO JUST 1/789 m.25. See Part II, Fig. 14.

114 *Crown Pleas of the Devon Eyre of 1238*, ed. H. Summerson (Devon & Cornwall Record Society, New Series 28-9, (1985-6), xx.

115 H.M. Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls* (London, 1930), Article 7, p.249.

116 *Rotuli Hundredorum I*, 10.

exactions of the sheriff and his bailiffs. This implies that it was to the courts within her liberty that her men owed suit, not to the courts of the shire. The logical consequence of John's charter would seem to be that royal officials were excluded from the liberty, but what responsibilities she was obliged to discharge, or what profits she was entitled to take, are not spelt out. There is no record that the abbey had explicitly been granted the franchise of Return of Writ, which alone would have entitled them to exclude the sheriff and collect fines themselves. The charter granted to the Abbot of Reading, for instance, spells out clearly that he was entitled to hold court 'for all assizes and recognitions, and all pleas of the crown.'[118] In the thirteenth century, the inclusion of a *non intromittat* clause in the charter was essential if the conflicting claims of the sheriff and local lord to exercise the royal writ were to be resolved in favour of the lord. It seldom was. After the *Quo Warranto* proceedings the franchise of return of writs referred more generally to the right of the liberty holder to exclude the sheriff.[119]

The presence of the county sheriff in Wherwell shows up in early returns in the Pipe Rolls. The earliest record is of a *murdrum* fine paid in 1157, followed by a fine for the giving of false judgement in 1167, and some amercements for breaches of forest regulations in the time of King John.[120] Details of these infringements would have been submitted by Wherwell Hundred's jury of presentment to the royal justices when they were conducting one of their periodic eyres, which became increasingly frequent after 1166.

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117 Wormald (1995).

118 *The Roll of Writ File of the Berkshire Eyre*, ed. M. Clanchy SS 90 (1973), xxix - xli.

119 M. Clanchy, 'The Franchise of Return of Writs,' *TRHS 5th series 17* (1967).

120 *PR, 4 Henry II*, 174; *14 Henry II*, 184; *3 John*, 110, 111; *4 John* 75, 201; *5 John*, 148; *6 John*, 128.

No record survives to show that the abbess of Wherwell held a separate hundred court in addition to her manorial court, but as the boundaries of the manor and the hundred coincided, jurisdictions might well have been blurred. Did the abbess's steward preside at both or did he hand over, at a given moment, to the bailiff of the hundred ? Was the bailiff of the hundred answerable to the sheriff or to the abbess? and would he have been more significant figures in the hundredal court than the abbey's steward? Cam notes that when an abbot was lord of both the hundred and the manor, the two courts might meet on the same day, probably at three-weekly intervals, but were unlikely to have merged completely 'unless the lord of the hundred held all the soil of the hundred.'[121] This was the exact position of the Abbess of Wherwell, but there is insufficient surviving evidence to establish how her juridictions were exercised.

Although the abbey's right to take the perquisites from the manorial courts survive clearly in the one surviving *compotus* roll, there are no records to show the extent of any profits taken by the abbess as a holder of the hundred; but the Hampshire Eyre rolls, show that the abbess was obliged, through her officers, to levy fines and distraints, amercements due to the king, to effect summonses and attachments, and present these to the royal justice. In effect she seemed to enjoy many of the privileges enjoyed by lords who did have the Return of Writ.[122]

The issue of whether the abbess of Wherwell had her own coroner, or not, is also interesting. The only document in the cartulary which mentions a coroner is

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121 Cam (1944), 60.

122 R.F. Hunniset, *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), 146.

on f.220, but this is late fifteenth century.[123] A key time for her to secure her own might have been around 1200 when King John granted franchisal coroners as a means of raising cash, but the early records do not specify that she did. On the contrary, there is one surviving coroner's roll, for 1350, which suggests that she did not have her own coroner.[124] This is the roll of John Fauconer *coronator domini regis*, not *coronator Abbatisse,* and it reports an inquest into a murder in Wherwell hundred at which sworn jurors from Middleton, Wherwell, Clatford and the other villages gave witness. The abbess certainly had her own coroner on the Isle of Wight, however, since at the Eyre of 1280, she said that although her predecessors had had a coroner on the island from time immemorial, she wished to give up the privilege.[125] The Isle of Wight was a liberty akin to a regality, and the Lord of the Island, as well as claiming extensive franchises for himself, granted them to his greater tenants. At the time of the *Quo Warranto* proceedings, the Lord of the Island was Countess Isabella, and she fought to retain her freedom on the grounds of continuous use, retaining the right to the return of all writs touching her tenants in the hundreds of East and West Medina, where the abbess's lands lay, but the Bishop of Winchester and the Abbess of Wherwell were explicitly excluded in the verdict, implying that they were to retain their own franchise.[126] The duties of the island coroner was quite onorous, as he had to travel back and forth to Southampton to present his pleas. The perquisites that he took were officially due to the king, and we simply do not know how far the king had

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123 This is discussed at the end of this section.

124 PRO JUST 2/152. The roll is in extremely poor condition.

125 PRO JUST 1/789.m.25.

126 The jurisdiction on the Isle of Wight is the subject of a whole chapter in N. Denholm-Young, *Seigneurial Jurisdiction in England* (Oxford, 1937), 99-106. He makes no reference to JUST 1/789.

granted the abbess, as his agent, the right to take profits from crown pleas.[127] It is unlikely that she would have willingly given up the privilege of having a coroner if it was lucrative.

The Eyre Rolls reveal the sort of problems which troubled the Wherwell community: there were constant reiterations by the jury that the vills had failed to provide witesses at inquests, and that they had given incorrect valuations for the *deodand;* the vills were on more than one occasion subjected to the *murdrum* fine because they failed to turn up to prove *englishry* (Part II, Fig.15). These examples are a reminder that even if authority was in the hands of the abbess and her officers, and was reinforced by an independent coroner, it was an uphill task enforcing it.[128] Even in straightforward cases, one is left asking questions; for instance in an entry in one of the Eyre Rolls marked *de vinis,* a member of the Forester family is reported to be selling wine contrary to regulations. She took the fine, but why? Presumably she was claiming that she had the right to the proceeds from the the assize of wine and victuals as well as bread and ale, but this is not specified by the jurors in the *Quo warranto* section of the Eyre Roll.[129]

Sometime the abbess and the king came into conflict over these issues. This was surely because of the lack of real evidence for the abbess's claim to her various franchises. Reliance on the sworn testimony of jurors that she had enjoyed continuous use was allowable, but open to dispute.[130] In a case before the king's bench in 1377 the Abbess claimed the right to *catalla vocata Wayf et Stray et catalla*

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127 Cam (1930), 54.

128 This happened, for instance, following the murder of Roger de Ingepenne in Wherwell, and Richard Langeford and his wife Amicia. These cases are in PRO JUST 1/789, r.25 and JUST 1/784, r.12.

129 PRO JUST 1/786

fugitorum.[131] She asserted that she and her predecessors had held them from the time of the foundation. The issue had arisen because of a particular case which ran to several hearings; at these, Abbess Joan Cockerell (1361-1375) had had to defend the confiscation by her reeve, under her supervision, of the goods of Henry Harold, who had killed his wife and taken refuge in Wherwell church. Her assertion that her predecessors had always done this was backed up by the jurors who recalled that Abbess Amicia Ladde (1340-1361) had confiscated the goods of John *de Brassingbourne* without the king objecting; the justices, however, were hard to persuade. They returned no less than nine times to consider their verdict, and although eight years later the Abbess claimed that they had, in the end, found in her favour, the judgement had not been effective, and the exchequer was still harassing her for the money on behalf of the king.[132] The abbess's handling of the case suggests that she had assumed that she could claim the goods direct, without reference to the royal justices, or to the sheriff. Henry Harold was a wealthy man; he had appealed for sanctuary and his goods were valued at £35. 4s. 8d.

The drama associated with a felon or murderer taking refuge within a church, was always a difficult issue, all the more so, perhaps, because of its comparative rarity, and because the secular and spiritual values did not always coincide. The Abbess of Wherwell was clearly flustered around 1490 when she asked her receiver to take legal advice on what to do with a felon claiming sanctuary in their church. **[T]**

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130 Hunniset (1961), 139.
131 PRO KB27/466.
132 *CPR 1381-85*, 489.

f.220.[133] It is the only document in the cartulary which refers to her having a coroner.

In summary, the question of how much successive abbesses had been able to take from the profits of justice cannot be verified, but it is safe to assume that she did enjoy a substantial income from this source.

3.9. Assessing the credits and debits.

Wherwell had many things in its favour in terms of financial security. The abbey held its lands in free alms of the king. According to Domesday, some, but not all of its property, was exempt from geld. It was also exempt from the burden of providing knights' service: William the Conqueror realised that it was in his interests to have the support of the religious houses of England, and it was in his power to grant concessions to monasteries on matters such as knight's service, officially owed to the king by all tenants-in-chief.[134] A vast discrepancy has been found in the amount of service demanded of different lords, both lay and ecclesiastical. If a religious house failed to seek an accomodation with the Conqueror, there were serious financial implications; furthermore, this accommodation had to be reached quickly when the ill-feeling about the conquest was still very much alive and William was trying to subdue the newly conquered island. No concessions were granted after 1070, but within four years of the Norman invasion, Wherwell, Romsey, and Amesbury all managed to gain exemption from providing military service to the king.[135] Nunneries were not automatically exempt, for instance, Shaftesbury, whose

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133 For more on the role of the coroner, see Hunniset (1961), 39-40. and G. Rosser, 'Sanctuary and Social Negotiation,' in *The Cloister and the World,* ed. J. Blair & B. Golding (Oxford, 1996), 58 - 69.

134 This was not new, see J. Gillingham, 'The introduction of knight's service into England,' in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (1981), 53-63.

135 H.W. Chew, *English Ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief and knight service* (Oxford, 1932), 4-10.

gross income at the time of Domesday stood at £234 5s 0d., as against Wherwell's £52 5s. 0d., had to provide a quota of seven knights. Wilton, whose value was even higher than Shaftesbury had to provide five. It seems that no religious house whose value was below £54, whether nunnery or a monastery, was obliged to provide service.[136]

By the time Matilda had been in office a few years, huge benefits accrued to the abbey, based on an increasing income from newly donated manors, churches and tithes, and various parcels of land as demonstrated above; these benefits endured into Euphemia's time, but expansion and success brought with it its own problems. The building works undertaken by Matilda and Euphemia were surely expensive. We know that Euphemia was assured some financial help from Henry III; at his 1237 visit he cancelled a debt of 10 marks which she owed him.[137] He also made some generous grants in kind to Euphemia, notably of oak from Chute Forest; the reason for the grants of timber were often specified:

1234 *x. fusta* (tree trunks) *ad domos reparandos*

1249 *xii. quercus* (oaks) *ad reparacionem domorum suarum*

1255 *xv. quercus ad fabricam ecclesie*[138]

It is worth noting that this last grant was very substantial, amounting to 15 oak trees, considerably more than one would expect to be needed for a repair job; another fifteen oaks were donated in the following year. Discussion of Euphemia's building works can be found below.[139] Henry III also regularly gave venison and wine to the nuns at Wherwell. Two does (*damas*) was a typical gift, and a cask (*dolium*) of wine

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136 For a table showing the different quotas, see Knowles (1950), 702-3. See also pp. 118, 136-7.
137 *CR 1234-37*, 410.
138 *CR 1231-34*, 372; *1234-47*, 273; *1247-51*, 168; *1254-56*, 252.

was granted on several occasions as a pittance to the nuns. A pittance was a valued perk, over and above the normal ration of food or drink.[140] After Euphemia's death in 1257, the king continued to give venison to the abbey for the feasts celebrating the installation of the two succeeding abbesses.

As far as the abbey's prosperity was concerned in these years, the abbey had special reason to be grateful to John for his charter of 1207 because he had granted the abbess the right to hold a fair for four days every year from 28 June-1 July (**2**). Annual fairs could be very lucrative, attracting customers from far and wide. In 1267 the abbey acquired a further trading concession: the right to enjoy a weekly market.[141] This meant that the abbess could expand her income by levying a charge on all the stall holders as well as an entrance fee. In 1280 Abbess Mabel de Tichbourne (1262-1281) came in person to the Eyre to defend this grant, which had been made to her in 1267 by Henry III. **S21** gives an interesting fourteenth-century view of the goings on at the market. The Abbess was pleased that it attracted outside traders who laid out their merchandise in the parish church, encouraging trade and making it a more attractive occasion for the locals, but the Bishop had objected on the grounds that it was unseemly to have traders setting up stalls in the church and had ordered the Archdeacon to forbid it. The Abbess then complained that the loss of these stalls would depress trade and made her case so strongly that Bishop Sandale (1316-19) revoked the order.

The picture of expansion and prosperous living at Wherwell which is reflected in Henry III's gifts during the middle of the thirteenth century, masks what must have

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139 Chapter 4.1.
140 Harvey (1993), 10.
141 JUST 1/780. r.8. See too **10** and *CChR 1257-1300*, 75.

increasingly become a problem, namely the increase in the number of nuns to 'more than forty', so proudly proclaimed in Matilda's obituary (**60**). This number was augmented yet again under Euphemia, when the number of *ancille* grew to eighty (**59**). The word *ancilla* meant 'handmaiden,' and it is not absolutely clear whether this meant nun in the context of Euphemia's expansion, but it probably did. However, it is interesting to note that at Chatteris, a female servant was referred to as an *ancilla*.[142] It may be recalled that Ethelred had granted the abbey lands in Dean, Sussex, to support the nuns and to provide them with income for clothing. This land was no longer in the hands of the abbey at the time of Domesday, and there is no record to suggest that any specific endowment had replaced it.

Some idea of the cost of supporting the nuns at Wherwell can be deduced from examining the 1297 *compotus* roll in detail. The bottom section of the roll gives the total receipts as £30. 17s. 7d. Underneath there is a statement that the minister had allowed £13. 6s. 8d. [20 marks] for the cost of the *sustentacio* of the nuns, during the 70 days of the vacancy. Beneath this, in a passage scored through to imply satisfactory payment, the minister laid out the expenses in more detail: they were to cover *poutura* for the nuns, which is an allowance of food, and *companagium* from the kitchen, translated by Latham as 'relish, or something eaten with bread;' this cost 20 marks. His calculation of 2 marks *per* week for the maintenance of the nuns would therefore appear to be accurate. On these figures, the sum for maintaining the nuns at the convent for a whole year would therefore be 104 marks, or £70. 0s. 8d. Unfortunately, of course, the actual number of nuns is not mentioned. It was forty years since had Euphemia died, and many of the *ancille* whom she brought to

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142 *Chatteris*, 105.

Wherwell must have passed on themselves or be making quite heavy demands on the infirmary. The net. income in 1291 from both the temporalities and the spiritualities together was £210. 18s. 15½d.,[143] so the share taken to support the nuns would have amounted to around one third of the total income.

There are no documents in the cartulary at all which make any direct reference to dowries being given to the abbey on the presentation of a novice. The lack of evidence at Wherwell mirrors the void noticed by Coldicott in wider monastic sources.[144] Apparently under the rule of St. Benedict the giving of dowries was not compulsory, but it seems that a distinction was drawn between dowries that were given freely and voluntarily and those that were demanded, the latter being actually forbidden by a canon issued at the 4th Lateran Council on account of it being deemed simoniacal.[145] William Wykeham acted in the spirit of this ruling when, on his visitation to Wherwell in 1387, he ordered that no money should be taken by the Abbess and convent on the entry of a new nun.[146]

It does seem improbable, however, that well-to-do families in the locality should be able to send their daughters to Wherwell without making any special provision. Possibly records were kept in a special book, as was the case at Shaftesbury. BL Harley 61 commences: *Has scriptas dederunt homines cum filiabus eorum ad ecclesiam S. Eduardi, Shafton.'* A typical entry reads: *H.C. tenet .ii. hidas quas D de M dedit cum filia sua. Valet .xv.s.*: This is an absolutely explicit entry, far removed from anything in the Wherwell cartulary. Perhaps this willingness to

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143 *Taxatio*, 214.

144 Coldicott (1989), 108.

145 *Chatteris*, 51-53.

146 S. Luce, 'Injunctions made and issued to the Abbess and Convent of Monastery of Romsey after his visitation by William Wykeham AD 1387,' *PHFC 17* (1949-52), 40.

attract or accept lands was the factor which kept Shaftesbury ahead of Wherwell in the wealth league.[147] Another possibility is that hidden benefits could come the abbey's way: an entry in the Patent Rolls shows that in 1384, the king ordered that during the life of Mary Bacon, a nun of Wherwell, two fat bucks and two winter does, should be given to the abbey each year from the forest of Chute.[148] Presumably this woman had some association with the king, and he felt bound to make some provision for her upkeep. He specified particularly that the deer should not be taken from the abbess's own woods within Chute, but his own. If there are no documents relating to nuns' dowries at Wherwell, there is one relating to a corrodian. This is a grant dated 1293 by the Abbess Elena de Percy to Amicia, daughter of Roger of Dunstable (**94**). This corrody is to be 'equal to that of a nun.' For this the applicant had to pay £20 to the Abbey and an annual rent of 4s.

According to the documents, Wherwell may have run into financial problems in the fourteenth century. Abbess Mabel de Tichbourne (1262-81) borrowed 20s. from Benetus the Jew in Winchester 'to be spent on the common business of the house' (**180**), and left a debt of 20s. outstanding which led to a suit being brought by Peter of Fareham (**203**). These were modest debts compared with ones incurred in the fourteenth century. In 1315, John Drokensford, Bishop of Bath and Wells (1309-1329), was at last in receipt of £20 which he had lent to Abbess Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333) a few years previously (**451**). John had been awarded Wherwell's prebend of Goodworth with Compton, so it is interesting to note the financial benefits which the abbey gained from having a canon of such wealth and

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These injunctions were sent on to Wherwell, with additions.

[147] These quotes from BL Harley 61 are in K. Cooke, 'Donors and daughters: Shaftesbury Abbey's Benefactors, Endowments and Nuns 1086-1130,' in *Anglo-Norman Studies XII* (1990).

status. As well as being a great pluralist, having proved himself as a clerk in the king's service, John Drokensford had houses in Surrey and Kent as well as Weyhill, near Andover.[149] He was not the only Bishop to lend money to Wherwell Abbey. In 1342 Abbess Amicia Ladde (1340-61) borrowed £30 from Adam Orleton (1335-45) which had to be repaid within six months on penalty of distraint (**179**). These examples either demonstrate that the abbey was in considerable financial difficulty during the early part of the fourteenth century, or that it was borrowing on quite a large scale, perhaps to invest in some of the acquisitions made under the Statute of Mortmain cited above.

Evidence to back the financial difficulty hypothesis can be found in a document dated 1304 (**294**). This is a letter from pope Benedict XI to the prior of Hyde Abbey. The pope ordered the abbot to look into a complaint by the Abbess that over the past years they and their predecessors had been obliged to hand over 'tithes, dwellings, lands, possessions, meadows, pastures, groves, mills and rights of jurisdiction' to clerics and lay people *illicite*, causing grave loss to the monastery; they claimed that these grants had been confirmed by common form letters issued by the apostolic see. The abbey's messengers had travelled to Rome to ask Benedict XI to revoke the letters of their predecessors who had made these lavish grants, notwithstanding the usual censures which they contained. The trouble and expense the Abbess and convent took to arrange a trip to Rome to obtain audience with Benedict XI was a measure of how seriously they felt they had been exploited,

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148 *CPR 1381-85*, 399.
149 *Drokensford*, 313.

Unfortunately the results of the enquiry are unknown. What the exact nature of the grievance was is uncertain. The charge seems to have been that Abbess Isabella's predecessors, Abbess Elena (1282-1298) and Mabel de Tichburne (1262-1281), granted away substantial property at uneconomic rents, either to clerks or lay people. If this was the case, then the later years of the thirteenth century would have seen a substantial falling away of income. Unfortunately it is hard to find support for these injudicious grants in the cartulary.

There is no doubt about sincerity of the abbey's complaints about the rector of Wherwell in 1347-48. They resulted in a lengthy Inquiry which is fully reported in the cartulary (**54-57**). The nuns were seeking to appropriate the parish church of Wherwell because of the gross neglect of the current rector. Their hope, of course, was to increase their income. The nuns pleaded poverty by claiming that there had been no increase in rents and possessions since the foundation, rather there had been a notorious decline in their fortunes (**55**).

Although the rector may well have been neglectful, the abbey was surely stretching the truth here; the bulk of this chapter has demonstrated that, contrary to what they pleaded at the enquiry, the abbey had made considerable additions to its land holdings during the centuries since the foundation, so their pleas were ritual in part. However, there were probably genuine problems; for instance, the nuns claimed that their finances became stretched because the religious community faced not only an increase in the number of nuns, but an increase in the number of lay sisters as well (**55**). Blame was directed on 'repeated acts of the kings and queens of England during vacancies of the archbishopric of Canterbury and the bishopric of Winchester.' The result was that 'every woman living a secular life, who wishes to

embrace religion, has been able to obtain perpetual sustenance from the goods and produce of the monastery.' They were to have equal portions to the nuns. The problem was acknowledged by Bishop Edington who in March 1364, sent a circular letter to the Abbesses of Nunnaminster, Romsey, Wherwell and Wintney urging them to stop receiving any sisters beyond the number they could afford to maintain or what was laid down in the past.

The maintenance of the nuns themselves was already an acknowledged problem. In 1327, the bishop of Winchester wrote to the abbess of Wherwell complaining that he had already told her twice previously that on no account was she to accept any more 'damsels' as nuns unless they could offer means of support. 'We are absolutely determined not to be moved from this resolve,' he added.[150]

Another recognised drain on monastery finances was the granting of corrodies. In September 1364 bishop Edington demanded that the abbey should report to him on their financial situation, and issue no more corrodies without his permission.[151] These corrodies may have been forced on the abbey by the king. There is certainly a suspicion that pressure was put on the monastery's finances when the king exercised his right to oblige the abbess to grant a pension to one of his clerks, pending the provision of one of the abbey's benefices; a document which directly demonstrates this is **112.** This issue is linked to the granting of 'expectancies' and will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.2 below.

Financial demands by the king were a feature of the fourteenth century; for instance, the compulsory obligation to purchase of licences for alienations, noted

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150 Coldicott (1989), 43.
151 *Reg. Edington II*, 57.

above, were costly; as an example, Henry le Wayte, presumably on behalf of the abbey, paid 5 marks in 1325 for his licence of alienation, and 9 marks in 1331.[152] Disputes with the king over the forests, also to be discussed below, caused enormous concern, leading the abbess to exclaim that she and her tenants faced ruin (**68**). But nothing put more pressure on the abbey's finances than the demands made by Edward III to support his military ventures, in particular the Flemish campaigns; the clergy complained vociferously about this at the Council of London in 1342.[153] Hampshire was particularly vulnerable at this time, due, as the nuns themselves said at the enquiry, 'to the monastery's proximity to the sea ports, to which both the royal troops and their followers converge,' causing injury and devastation (**55**). The confusion caused by troop movements heading towards the channel ports, and making unwelcome demands for hospitality was exacerbated, so the nuns said, by destruction of buildings, and the old horrors of murrain and pestilence. Their complaints were probably well founded.[154]

The sort of pressures under which Wherwell itself suffered is borne out by a mandate issued in 1339 to John Brocas, Keeper of the King's great horses; the king believed that invasion was imminent, and Brocas was ordered to take his horses to places 'far from the sea and cause the horses to be kept there.' The destination named in the mandate was Wherwell, and one can imagine the demands, practical

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[152] *CPR 1324-27*, 132; *1330-34*, 168.

[153] B. Bolton, 'The Council of London of 1342,' *Studies in Church History: Councils and Assemblies*, 7. ed. C.J. Cuming & D. Baker (Cambridge, 1971), 149.

[154] Hartridge (1930), 104-115 etc; A. Hamilton Thompson, *The English Clergy and their Organisation in the late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1974), 172-4. R.M. Haines, *The Church and Politics in 14th.c. England:The Career of Adam Orleton* (Cambridge, 1978), 64-9.

and financial, that were put on the abbey when such a large contingent of the king's men and horse were landed on them, apparently indefinitely.[155]

Bearing in mind the dependence by the abbey, already noted, on income from their manor of Ashey on the Isle of Wight, the stress that the island suffered during these years was surely particularly felt at Wherwell. A state of emergency was declared on the island in 1335, and in spite of the strenuous efforts that were made to protect the island, the French actually landed there in 1340. All landholders were urged to stand firm and the wealthy were forbidden to leave, so that money and manpower could be available for the defences.[156] These strictures can only have had a detrimental effect on the finances of Wherwell, and they were to remain for most of the rest of the century. On a final note, widespread unrest in Hampshire at this time is reflected in the register of Bishop Orleton of Winchester, perhaps as a result of increasing anti-clericalism; at Wherwell itself, a priest was assaulted.[157]

Another factor which effected the Abbey's income was the Black Death, which hit Hampshire in the summer of 1348, and returned again in 1361/2.[158] This latter outbreak had a more obvious effect on Wherwell in that it carried off Abbess Amicia in September 1361 and Abbess Constancia only two months later, suggesting that the plague had penetrated to the very heart of Wherwell. It must be said, though, that there is no mention in the cartulary of the pestilence, and the fact that it was not raised at the enquiry of 1347/8 almost certainly indicates that the enquiry took place before the plague arrived.

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155 *CCR 1339-1341*, 236.
156 Hockey (1982), 83-98.
157 Haines (1972), 3-7. Haines (1978), 66. See too D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae II*, 702 & 709.
158 T.B. James, 'The Black Death in Hampshire,' *Hampshire Papers 18* (HCC 1999).

One of the most pressing problems which followed in the wake of the plague, and of the untimely death of two abbesses, was the issue of custody of the temporalities during vacancies. The king was entitled to claim profits from these as Wherwell remained a royal house, with the king was its patron.[159] Wherwell's abbesses were conspicuously long lived, and vacancies had hitherto been infrequent; but Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333), anticipating her own end after thirty years as abbess, took particular trouble to safeguard the abbey's independence. She secured a letter from Edward III on 11 January 1330, that in future vacancies, the prioress and convent would have the sole guardianship of the abbey, saving to the king 'knights' fees held of the abbey and the advowsons of churches' (**295**). Four months later, this was confirmed by letters patent, and more detail was furnished: in the event of a vacancy, the sheriff and other ministers of the king were only entitled to take simple seisin in the name of the king within the abbey precinct, after which they should withdraw completely (**78**).[160] Isabella took trouble to secure a further confirmation from the king in February 1331 (79); her fear was that Edward's grant would be considered valid only on her own death, whereas she wanted to be sure that the grant applied to a vacancy following the death of any future abbess as well, amounting to a permanent exemption. Isabella's fears should have been allayed by **79.** There was, of course, a price to pay for this concession: the abbess and convent were obliged to pay £230 *per annum* for each vacancy, but they were entitled to a *pro rata* reduction if the vacancy lasted for less than a year.

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159 S. Wood, *English Monasteries and their Patrons in the 13th.c.* (Oxford, 1955), 8-9, 75.

160 The aggravation caused by the interference of ministers of the forest at this time demonstrates the extent of their grievances, see Chapter 5.3. below.

Abbess Isabella resigned before her death in 1333, but when her successor, Matilda de Littleton died, the abbess's representatives, John *de Ingepenne* and Richard *de Cormailles*, apparently managed to persuade the king that the abbey was unable to meet the cost, because Edward pardoned the abbess and convent of having to pay 'all issues and profits arising from the temporalities during the last two vacancies.' **[F.ii.]** f.215v.[161]

The vacancies in question presumably followed the deaths of Isabella and Matilda, though there is some slight uncertainty about this as the note of this concession is in a section which explains the circumstances of the vacancy following the death of Amicia Ladde (1339-1361). The only evidence of the supposed pardon of Easter 1339 is the content of the mandate sent to William Trussell, the escheator, on 15 March 1340, which obliges him to honour the terms of the February 1331 concession.[162]

Although things might well have been difficult at Wherwell in 1339, as demonstrated by the submissions at the Inquest of 1347/8, they were surely even more desperate in 1361/2, as both Amicia Ladde and Constancia (1361-1361) died of the plague in the autumn of 1361, so much so that Amicia Ladde managed to persuade the king to cancel her debt pertaining to 'the issues and profits of the temporalities of the abbey pertaining to the king by reason of the last two voidances,' because the abbey was 'much depressed.'[163] The words echo those of the supposed pardon of 1339/40 secured after Matilda's death. Had the abbey managed to secure a

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161 PRO. C81/263/262. Part II, Fig. 16. This says that Matilda died in 1339. *CPR 1338-40*, 442 records her death in March 1340.

162 *CPR 1339-41*, 372.

163 *CPR 1361-64*, 156. This was issued on 30 January 1362.

permanent exemption from all charges ? Did this mean that even the *pro rata* payments had been pardoned ?

Whatever the truth about the circumstances prior to 1361, the abbey went to great lengths to record the documents regarding custody of the temporalities at the back of the cartulary. For the vacancy which occurred in 1375, following the death of Joan Cokerell (1361-1375), they claimed that under the terms of 'the writ of Edward III,' date unspecified, and a writ of 1 Richard II [1377], they would only have to pay 25s.5d. out of the *pro rata* payment of £22 14s. 11d. There is no surviving trace of the 1377 writ. Since the abbey was quoting from a writ of 1377 when Joan had died in 1375, these calculations must have been the product of at least two years delay.[164]

The record keeping continued. When Cecily Lavyngton died in 1412, the abbey owed £35 19s. 0 *ob.* under the *pro rata* agreement, but successfully claimed a reduction of £9 5s. 8d. *ob* five years later under the terms of a writs of 5 Henry V, and 4 Henry V, the latter is quoted as containing a clause stating that the abbess and convent were to be released of 'all fines, amercements, issues, reliefs, scutages and every other kind of charge.' [**F.vi.**] f.216v). Once more, there is no record of these writs in the *CPR.* Whereas her predecessors had claimed precedents based on the generosity of Edward III, in times of special hardship, Alice Parys secured new precedents from Henry V for no declared reason, except, perhaps precedent.

As well as demonstrating the desperate attempts of successive abbesses to keep the abbey well in credit, these series of documents demonstrate the pressure the

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[164] The mandate sent to Oliver de Harnham to restore the temporalities of the abbey to Cecily Lavyngton was sent on 22 October, 1375. *CPR 1374-77*, 183.

king and his ministers were under from religious houses in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Wherwell seems to have been remarkably successful in gaining permanent concessions, which were intended to relieve the abbey in times of special hardship. Muddle at Westminster, combined with confusion or guile at Wherwell, could have created an opportunity for exploitation on all sides. The abbey was not beyond error, as is suggested by the wrong dating of their application for a licence following the death of Matilda de Littleton, but there must be a suspicion that the abbey succeeded in bamboozling the king by claiming false concessions on the custody of the temporalities; it had certainly presented him with the bogus foundation charter of Alfred the Great in 1378.[165] Not that there was lack of scrutiny by royal officials: in 1353 James Huse, Baron of the Exchequer, presided over an Inquisition into the ninth of fleeces and sheaves, during which the abbess had to explain how and why her taxes had been assessed (72). The abbey did all it could to save itself from prying eyes; this was the root of the effort to bar the escheator, and other officers of the crown from the abbey during vacancies. Possibly they had been under valuing the abbey for tax purposes and did not want the escheator to see. This is suggested by the contrast between the valuations given at the time of the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas in 1291, when the temporalities were valued at around £201 *net*, i.e. after costs had been deducted; and those given in 1535 they were valued at £403. 12s. 10d gross, and £339 8s. 7d. *net*, perhaps a more realistic figure.[166]

The credits and debits enjoyed or suffered by the abbey over the years, reveal that the abbey endured a mix of constraints, from both its own men and from the king,

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165 *CPR 1377-81*,

166 *Taxatio*, 214; for 1535, see *Monasticon II*, 642 & or *Valor Ecclesiasticus II* (1814), 7.

but that they counterbalanced it by some determined initiatives. On balance, Wherwell held up reasonably well financially as a religious house, so that by 1535, although having only 25 nuns at the time of the dissolution, its net income of £339. 8s. 7d. compared with Shaftesbury's £1,166; Wilton's £601; Barking's £528; Dartford's £488; Romsey's £393 10s. 10½d; St. Mary's Winchester's at £179 7s. 2d., and Chatteris's £97.[167]

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[167] For some discussion, see Coldicott (1989), 114; E. Power, *English Medieval Nunneries* (Cambridge, 1922) 2-3; Gilchrist (1994), 41-44; *Chatteris*, 40.

CHAPTER 4

PEOPLE OF WHERWELL: WITHIN & WITHOUT THE CLOISTER

4.1. The abbey and its abbesses before 1257[1]

The question of who enjoyed the honour and burden of being abbess of Wherwell, was of course, of critical importance. The personality and capability of the head of a religious house had a huge bearing on its ability to attract patronage and maintain status.[2] It has already been seen that the two abbesses who did most to consolidate the fortunes of Wherwell in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were Matilda de Bailleul (?1173-1213) and Euphemia de Walliers (1213-1257), and consequently they will be the main focus of this section. It is a cause for regret that although there are documents from the time of Euphemia's successors, no tributes have been left to reveal anything about their personalities. Some of their problems and achievements have already been discussed in Chapter 3 , but no more can be done to bring them into focus; this unfortunately gives the thesis an unbalanced view, but it is a reflection on the surviving records. Nor do Wherwell's sources add anything to what is already known about those who dominated the abbey's life during the first hundred years of its existence. There is only one broad observation that might be made about Wherwell's abbesses as a whole: their origins varied dramatically. The early abbesses were closely associated with the Wessex royal house; the abbesses of the Norman era are wholly anonymous; and the abbesses who led Wherwell Abbey in

its time of real glory in the twelfth and thirteen centuries were from Flanders. From the end of the thirteenth century until the dissolution, many, but not all, of the abbesses, were from prosperous local Hampshire families.[3]

With regard to the Anglo-Saxon abbesses, mention has already been made of the first named Abbess, Heanfled, to whom Ethelred the Unready's diploma is addressed (1); the grants of independence from the royal family, achieved in 1002, must in some measure have been attributable to the energies of this woman. There is a possibility that she was also head of Amesbury Abbey, another nunnery founded by Elfthryth.[4]

Wherwell retained its early association with the Wessex royal house, though not always in the happiest of circumstances. Ethelred's queen, Emma, had married Cnut after Ethelred's death, and was eventually sent to Wherwell in disgrace because, in the succession struggle which followed Cnut's death, and her own subsequent exile by Harold Harefoot (1035-1040), she aligned herself with her son, Harthacnut (1040-42) against the claims of her first-born son by Ethelred, Edward, later the Confessor (1042-66), whom she had more or less abandoned when he was a child.[5]

This was not the only royal association. Edward the Confessor's half-sister, Elfthryth, who was probably named after her grandmother, was abbess of Wherwell, certainly by 1051; this is implied by the account in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which

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1 For a list of Wherwell's abbesses, see Part II, Fig. 8. For detailed references, see Coldicott (1989), Appendix One, 163-4.

2 E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England* (Woodbridge, 1998), 134.

3 For instance: Mabel de Tichburne (1262-1281); Isabella de Wyntreshulle (1298-1333); Matilda de Littleton (1333-1340); Constancia de Wyntreshulle (1361-1361); Celily Lavyngtone (1375-1412); Anna Quarley (1451-1452); Avelina Cowdrey (1518-1529); Morpheta Kingsmill (1535-dissolution).

4 Coldicott (1989), 19.

5 *AM II,* 16-21. Barlow (1970), 76-8. Stafford (1997), 20-1. Coldicott (1989), 21-3.

explains that Edward, who had tired of his wife, Edith, 'entrusted her to the care of his sister at Wherwell.'[6] Accordingly two Queens and one princess were sheltered by Wherwell in the years immediately before the conquest. The tradition which Elfthryth established of creating a monastic house to which the royal family could return in times of trouble had endured, in spite of its success in gaining a *quasi* independent status.

A point that should be re-emphasised is the probable exclusiveness of Wherwell and the other Anglo-Saxon nunneries.[7] This tradition continued into the Norman era: in 1066, many women from the land-owning families retreated into religious institutions for fear of their lives as William the Conqueror and his followers siezed their property.[8]

It is a pity that there are no sources from Wherwell abbey in the late eleventh century which can fill in the picture of this period. The first primary source to shed even the faintest light on Wherwell's abbesses during the first half century after the conquest is a mortuary roll of 1113 in which three abbesses are named: *Elstrita abbatissa*, *Mathilda abbatissa*, and *Albereda abbatissa.*[9] The probability is that the *Elstrita* was the half sister of the Confessor, mentioned above; if so, some sense of tradition is evident in the fact that she was remembered in 1113. The names suggest

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6 *ibid*, 23-24. See also *ASChron*, 120-1. Stafford (1997), 153, 219.

7 J.Crick, 'The wealth, patronage and connections of women's houses in late Anglo-Saxon England,' *RB* (1999), 180.

8 The most famous evidence that this happened is the letter which Archbishop Lanfranc wrote to the Bishop of Rochester: *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* ed. H. Clover (1979), 166-7.

9 *RM* (1866), 188.

that her two successors were Norman, demonstrating that the organisation of Wherwell was comprehensively taken over at the conquest or shortly after.[10]

There is no record whatsover of anything about Wherwell or its abbesses between 1113 and 1141. This lack of evidence might be the result of the destruction of documents following the dramatic conflagration at Wherwell shortly after the siege of Winchester in 1141; but it should be noted that the lack of source material from this era is a common problem in many women's religious houses, the reasons being not just fire and flood, but also the fact that the keeping of written records was not yet widespread. Ignorance, particularly of Latin, poverty, and lack of educated clerks, also contributed to the vacuum. The potential benefits of creating written archives were yet to be realised.[11]

As to the event itself, it must have been an horrific experience for the abbess and her nuns. They had already had to give way to the Empress's plans to build a garrison for 300 of her knights at Wherwell. Then followed the arrival of the 'irresistable host,' under the nefarious William of Ypres, Queen Matilda's general from Flanders, who, having attacked and killed many of the inhabitants, set fire to the to church where the terrified nuns had fled.[12] There was no political motive for the burning down of Wherwell. The Abbey was a respected religious house, chosen by Henry of Blois as a suitable venue to negotiate with the Empress after the defeat of

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10 Cownie (1997), suggests that the king generally allowed existing heads of religious houses to live out their term before he appointed a Norman successor.

11 S. Thompson (1984), 131-9.

12 This version of the story is from the *Gesta Stephani*, ed. K.R. Potter (Oxford, 1976), 126-133; See too; *The Chronicles of John of Worcester III*, ed. & trans. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998) 293-303; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella* ed. E. King, trans. K.R. Potter (Oxford, 1998), 103-5. They offer slightly different versions of events. The above rendering is the one favoured by S. Painter, 'The Rout of Winchester,' in *Speculum* VII (1932), 70-4. Another careful analysis has been done by

Stephen at the battle of Lincoln.[13] The tragedy reflected the brutality of the civil war.[14]

The burning of Wherwell proved a decisive break in the fortunes of the abbey from which new beginnings eventually grew, but the smoke from the fire lingered in the air for a long time; indeed it was fifty years before it was anything like clear. The only printed source which offers a reminder that Wherwell was still up and running as an institution soon after the fire, is the Pipe Roll of 13 Henry III (1166), in which Geoffrey the Forester of Wherwell was ordered to pay 20s. into the exchequer as a forest fine. If an abbess was in charge at this time, we know nothing about her, except conceivably, her name. The calendars in both the surviving Wherwell psalters have a mysterious *obit*. In Cambridge St. Johns MS 68 there is one for an Abbess named Agnes, d. 29 August; and the *Kalendarium* has *O[bit] Egita* entered in on St. Rufus' s Day [27 August], but no other details are given, nor does it say that she was Abbess of Wherwell rather than anywhere else. It may be that she was associated with the abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer, or the nunnery at Bailleul, near Hazebroucke, with which the *Kalendarium* was briefly linked.[15]

One would wish to find evidence that the abbess and her nuns set about rebuilding their abbey and their community as best they could after the fire, but there is no evidence of this, rather it seems that the community was devastated. This is what can be deduced from the records which resume at the end of the twelfth century. The obituary to Abbess Matilda de Bailleul describes how she arrived at Wherwell to

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R. Hill, 'The Battle of Stockbridge, 1141,' in *Studies in medieval history presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C.J. Holdsworth & J.L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), 173-6.

13 M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda* (Oxford,1991), 97.

14 See for instance, *Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon*, ed. & trans. T. Forester (1999), 272ff.

find 'the buildings ruined and poorly funded,' whereuopon she, 'like a strong woman, despite many adversaries, restored the alienated and dispersed properties and acquired new ones'(**60**). In the same vein are the words of Celestine III, who issued Matilda with a papal privilege in 1194:

> 'It has come to the ears of the pope that when the monastery had reached the depths of impoverishment through the neglect and lack of care of certain people, through the solicitude and prudence of Matilda, the condition of the monastery was reformed, so that all things prospered.' (**8**).

Both these documents say that when Matilda became Abbess she found the abbey in a run down and debilitated state, if not actually in ruins, and through her own efforts, she restored the abbey to its former glory. It has already been noted in Chapter 3.2. how successful she was in expanding the abbey's lands at the end of the twelfth century, was she the abbess who first tried to pull the abbey together after its destruction ? If so, when did Matilda become abbess and under whose patronage did she act ?

Matilda was the daughter of Baldwin I de Bailleul, ~~of~~ a town near St. Omer, in Flanders, and Euphemia, sixteenth child of William II, Castellan of St. Omer.[16] The family tree is very complex, not least because there were no fewer than five castellans of St. Omer called William between 1100 and 1236. It seems that Matilda had at least ten full brothers and sisters and several half-brothers, one of whom was Baldwin II, Castellan of Ypres and Bailleul. The honour of being castellan of Ypres was not reserved for men; one of Matilda's sisters, Margaret, also held the title, and in fact

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15 See the discussion below on the two Wherwell psalters, and Thomson (1982) 59-60.

her husband only enjoyed it through his marriage to her. Perhaps the most notable member of her family, on her mother's side, was her great-uncle, Godfrey of St. Omer, who together with Hugh *de Payns*, founded the Order of the Knights Templar; indeed commitment to the Templars continued into the next generation, as Matilda's maternal uncle was Osto the Templar, an early master of the English Temple.[17]

Men from Flanders played a prominent role in twelfth-century life in England. Not only had there been early and strong connections between Stephen and Matilda with Flanders, but this continued once Henry II became king; he not only granted Flemings land in England, but important trading concessions as well.[18] However, the English sources have failed to shed any more light on the Bailleul family of Flanders;[19] instead, we have to rely on the lyrical description of Matilda's background which can be found at the back of the *Kalendarium.* Here there are two poems, probably written by her niece Euphemia. They show that Matilda was already a young widow when she came to Wherwell:

'By disposition a mother, by merits, Matilda was a matron,
And though she was not virgin in the flesh, she was a strong woman,
Married to a man, without children [ ].
A jewel of her race, and feminine only in her sex.
In behaviour and merits she was wholly virile.

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16 For a fully developed family tree, see E. Warlop, *Flemish nobility before 1300,* Part II, Vol.1, 634-8; Vol.2., *1106-1109* (Kortrijk, 1975). His principal source is Lambert of Ardres, SS. xxiv, 584-585.

17 M. Barber, 'Origins of the Order of the Temple,' in *Studia Monastica 12* (1970), 221-224. E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government restored* (Woodbridge, 1993), 103-4.

18 *ibid.*

19 The Bailleuls of St. Omer were not obviously connected with Jocelin de Bailleul, and the family who were to play such a prominent part in the battle for kingship in Scotland in the thirteenth century.

Flanders gave her nobility; Anglia, rule;

Wherwell, fulfillment (*finem*)'[20]

She was therefore a mature and very determined woman when she came to Wherwell, who commanded such love and respect that, as a second poem says, 'even the nightingale's song' could not ease the pain of her departing.[21]

The *obit* in the cartulary also spells out Matilda's strength and determination (**60**). It refers to the slack management by the demoralised survivors of the fire and the exploitation of the abbey by local men. As noted before, the cartulary documents do not say anything about the re-building of the abbey itself, but they do say that Matilda adorned the nave of the church with crosses, candlesticks and relics and gave valuable vestments and books, presumably at her own expense, indicating that she herself was a wealthy woman and deeply committed to improving the standards of the abbey in all respects (**60**). Two of the items listed in the sacrist's inventory of the abbey's valuables are goblets from which Thomas Becket had reputedly drunk (**S26**). In the absence of having a shrine at Wherwell, or any relics sufficient to attract pilgrims, these goblets would probably have been acquired by Matilda at the time of the Becket mania, around 1174, soon after Becket's canonisation.[22] The timing was perfect, as this is the year when Matilda most probably arrived at Wherwell; the acquisition of this relic would have helped boost

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[20] The two poems written in Matilda's honour are at the back of the *Kalenderium*. *Affectu mater, meritis matrona Matildis/ Et si non carne virgo, virago fuit/ Nupta viro sine prole virum [.....]/ Christo parturiens [.....]/ Gemma sui generis, et solo femina sexu/ Moribus et meritis: tota virilis erat./ La Flandria nempe genus, regimen dedit Anglia; finem/ Warewella, pia vita videre deum/ Crastina Lucie dedit huic primordia lucis/ Ut sic extrema, sit sibi prima dies./ Vera dies sit ei Deus ipse dator que quietis/ Ipsius ad requiem perpetuando diem.*

[21] The reference to the nightingale comes from the other poem on the same folio of the *Kalendarium*, as above: '*Demulcere nequit cantu philomena dolorem*' etc.

[22] A suggestion of Prof. Anne Duggan.

support for the rebuilding project. It was in recognition of these generous gestures that Celestine III granted Matilda the special prohibition on anyone removing her precious gifts (**8**).

All this evidence suggests that it was Matilda who took on the re-building of the abbey and the community, but this would mean that the abbey had to wait about 30 years before it was restored. It is just possible that the initiative to rebuild came from Flanders, possibly through the agency of Queen Matilda. This idea is suggested by the fact that her name is inexplicably included in the list of *obits* in the St. John 68 calendar. It seems extraordinary that the woman who was responsible for the Abbey's destruction in 1141 should be given such prominence; her name is hightlighted in gold letters. No other kings or queens are so honoured, indeed Elfthryth herself is not even included. There is thus a small possibility that she could have been the benefactor of the new Wherwell, perhaps *via* a personal connection with Matilda's family which is unrecorded, or a connection with Wherwell itself; this, combined with a desire to make good the destruction of the abbey by her infamous commander, makes her a possible candidate.[23] However there are severe weaknesses in this argument, the main one being that no other sources mention any connection between the Queen and Wherwell, nor could she have seen Matilda installed as abbess as she died in 1152. However, if the scheme to rebuild had been initiated earlier, then the argument holds some weight. If Queen Matilda had played a part in restoring the nunnery then it is conceivable that her generosity was deliberately kept secret. The reality is that not only did civil wars tend to distort

record keeping, but an *damnosa hereditas* might account for the silence. Queen Matilda represented the enemy to the young Henry II, and after he came to the throne in 1154 it would certainly not have been in the abbey's interests to publicise any connection with Queen Matilda, rather, the abbey could only flourish if it was able to gain the support of the king.

This was achieved, and the possibility must be considered that Henry II himself was responsible for the placing of Matilda at Wherwell and for promoting the launch of the abbey, rather than Queen Matilda. There are two undated charters of Henry II which might offer clues (**2**). The first was witnessed by Richard *de Humez*, constable. The fact that in 1156 Henry II visited St. Omer, Matilda's home town, and granted a charter which was also witnessed by Richard *de Humez*, seems an interesting coincidence, but unfortunately Richard, as one of Henry II's constables, was constantly in his company, perhaps over a period as long as 20 years. As the dating of most of the documents which survive is unclear, we cannot be certain that Henry II's charter is as early as 1156.[24]

Meanwhile two other points need to be made about Henry II's two grants: the first makes no mention of any abbess at all; it is a privilege granting to the traders of Wherwell, freedom from toll and passage throughout the land. Did the men therefore obtain this privilege in the absence of an abbess ? The second charter is addressed to Matilda by name, giving a pointer either to her arrival at Wherwell or to the culmination of her efforts at restoration. Alas, it is undated; nevertheless it is a letter

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[23] P.R.Coss, *Lordship, Knighthood and Locality* (Cambridge, 1991) 28 etc. notes that Ranulph II, Earl of Chester made reparation to the Bishop for the damage done to Coventry Priory, suggesting that this was perhaps expected practice..

of protection, bearing the all important guarantee that all the abbey's possessions were to be protected by the king, just as his own lands were.

It is not impossible that Matilda arrived at Wherwell as early as 1156-8 at the invitation of Henry II. If she was 20 in 1156 then she would have been 80 when she died in 1213, by now an old and distinguished women;[25] however, as we know she was already a widow, it is more likely that she arrived at Wherwell around 1174, at the age of around 30-40.

As outlined in Chapter 2.3, it is Wherwell's two psalters and calendars which shed so much light on both Matilda herself, and the date of her arrival at Wherwell. A detailed study of both this manuscript and the *Kalendarium* has been done by Rodney Thompson.[26] He has concluded that both St. John's 68 and the *Kalendarium* were made in the *scriptorium* of St. Albans Abbey under the supervision of the Simon Master, sometime during the 1160s. St. John's 68 could not have been made before 1152, because that year marks the significant *obit* of Queen Matilda, wife of King Stephen, mentioned above.

The personal nature of the *obits* suggest that it was specially commissioned by one of the Bailleul family, who evidently had close associations with the Abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer. The psalter would have gone straight to St. Bertin from St. Albans, only arriving at Wherwell when Matilda became abbess.[27] It bears the signs of being a personal gift rather than a gift to an institution, and this points to it being

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24 R.W. Eyton, *Court, Household and Itinery of Henry II* (1878), 16. *Calendar of Documents preserved in France I*, ed. J.H. Round (London, 1899), various entries.

25 *RLC,I*, 148a.

26 Thomson (1982), 37-8; 56-60.

given to Matilda when she took up her office at Wherwell. No connection between the Bailleul family and St. Albans has been traced, but it must be presumed. The *Kalendarium* had a similar early history, but it probably did not arrive at Wherwell until around 1189, perhaps with the young Euphemia. Like her aunt, she had been given a private psalter by her family in Flanders, before setting out for England. The calendar alone has survived as the *Kalendarium*, .

Returning to the question of patronage, it must be a possibility that someone who had the strength and drive to rebuild the lands in such difficult circumstances as Matilda, also had the personality to enthuse the local people to raise funds for the re-building and regeneration of the abbey, though it hardly seems credible that a young woman from Flanders in her twenties could have initiated the whole project. Was the rebuilding then a communal effort on the part of the battered Wherwell community, possibly backed by private funds and private contacts ? A massive building project on the scale of the abbey church was heavily dependent on the support of local people, and those at Wherwell had surely been shocked by the demise of their local abbey. There is good precedent for community efforts of this nature.[28] To aid this, moral, if not financial support from the highest level, could have been been forthcoming. Henry of Blois, who remained Bishop of Winchester until 1171, was an active patron of church building in the twelfth century, and although no records survive of him making any particular gesture towards Wherwell, he encouraged widespread church rebuilding in his diocese which has left such a lasting

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[27] Thomson gives careful consideration to the St. Bertin connection. See too, M.R. James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the MSS in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1913), 89-92.

[28] G. Rosser, 'The Anglo-Saxon Guilds,' in *Minsters & Parish Churches*, ed. J. Blair (1988), 31-33.

mark.[29] His successor-but-one as bishop of Winchester, Godfrey de Lucy (1189-1205), definitely had close contact with Matilda,[30] and the present parish churches of Middleton, Bullington, Tufton and Clatford all date from the end of the twelfth century, confirming that there was major restructuring at Wherwell during Matilda's time.[31]

The puzzle of who was the chief patron of the new abbey cannot definitely be resolved. Although someone must have struggled to keep the abbey going in the 25-30 years after the fire, it was surely Matilda who regained for the abbey something of its former prestige. Her strength, humility and high standard of learning are reflected in a personal prayer in Latin, probably inscribed by herself, which was entered in the front of her own Psalter, St. John's 68:

'Lord, Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One, Almighty God. Deign to accept these psalms which I long to sing in honour of your sacred name and in commemoration of the blessed virgin, Mary, and in honour of all your saints, male and female, who have pleased you from the beginning of the world. May the [singing] of them advance the honour [of the saints] and of our salvation, so that they of whom we make remembrance on earth, may deign to intercede for us in heaven, and for me, miserable sinner, and for all those committed to me, and all christians, living and dead, that we may have true perseverance, and the departed, everlasting peace. Amen.

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29 N. Riall, 'Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester: A patron of the 12th.c. Renaissance,' *Hampshire Papers*, 5 (HCC 1994).

30 See Chapter 3 above.

31 Part II, Fig.17 shows two photographs: the modest nature of the local flint and brick chancel of the church at Goodworth Clatford, with its 14th.c. tower, and the priest's doorway on the south side of the chancel of the church at Middleton, similar to those in many other local churches.

The resurrection of Wherwell Abbey was surely proof of the efficacy of Matilda's prayers for perseverance.

It can be seen that Abbess Matilda, who died in 1213, had regained for the abbey much of its prosperity and several new privileges. Her time at Wherwell had spanned the reigns of Henry II, Richard I and John. Her diplomatic skills must have played some part in ensuring the restoration of the abbey's lands during the tense period of the Interdict in 1208.[32] It fell to her successor, Abbess Euphemia (1213-1257) to continue the consolidation of the abbey's position as one of the leading religious houses in Hampshire, if not in England, and it seems she did this in part by developing a personal relationship with Henry III. The Chancery rolls show that in Euphemia's day, Henry III stayed several times at Wherwell, for instance in 1234, 1237 and 1241.[33] The frequent visits of Henry III to Wherwell are unmatched by those of any other king. Although it is possible that Henry I paid a visit to Wherwell in 1105, and without doubt the Empress Matilda and Henry of Blois met at Wherwell in 1141, no other records exist to suggest a significant royal conection.[34]

Euphemia's relationship to Matilda is confirmed in the first line of her own obituary in the cartulary **(59),** where Matilda is described there as being her aunt and compatriot. Euphemia was clearly named after Matilda's mother, Euphemia of St. Omer, who was probably also her grandmother. The St. John's Psalter contains an *obit* for Margaret *de Wallers, mater Eufemie Abbatisse,* on 24 November, thus it seems likely that Euphemia's mother was a sister of Matilda, who married a man called *de Wallers* or *de Walliers.* There are three men by the name of *de Walliers* in

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32 *RLC,I,* 110b.

the St. John 68 *obit* list: Baldwin, 2 January; Theodoric, 14 February and Theodoric, 13 September.[35] Unfortunately these are the only clues to Euphemia's paternal family and it has not been possible to trace them to any place in England; this suggests that they had remained primarily a Flemish family, and that Euphemia *de Walliers* was sent from Flanders to Wherwell as a girl, to be put under the care of her aunt. This reinforces the extent of the alien character of the community at Wherwell at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or at least the alien character of its leadership. Both Matilda and Euphemia continued to pride themselves on their Flemish origins.

Whatever the truth about Euphemia's early life, the influence of her aunt must have been enormous. When Matilda died, Prior Guy of Southwick Priory, wrote to Euphemia in familiar terms: having demonstrated his grief and shock at Matilda's death, he reminds Euphemia of the time when the three of them talked and laughed together, conjuring up a lively image of Matilda's conduct, and the pride and pleasure she took in having her neice at her side when entertaining dignitaries, like Guy, who clearly knew them both extremely well.[36] Euphemia's easy relationship with Guy of Southwick is mirrored in the close relationship she appears to have had with Philip de Faukonberg, Archdeacon of Huntingdon from 1223.[37] He was one of the abbey's canons, who clearly did visit the abbey frequently, as there are several charters which include him on the witness list. In his will he left 20 marks to be paid annually on his anniversary, to provide an allowance for the convent and its chaplain, and the poor

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33 *CR 1234-1237*, 28; *CR 1237-1242*, 269, 409-10, 516; *CChR, 1300-1326*, 347.
34 *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum II*, 41: *III*, 130.
35 Thomson (1988) 58.
36 This letter is at the back of the *Kalendarium*.

(**452**). He had been in the household of Bishop Godfrey de Lucy at Winchester at the turn of the century.[38] It is of particular interest that his mother, Agnes, is commmorated on the *Kalendarium obit* list, suggesting there was a personal connection which went deep.

The remarkable contribution that Euphemia made to the abbey is most famously noted in her obituary notice in the cartulary (**59**). The author first pays tribute to her efforts at improving the status of the nuns, and to the standard of her moral encourgement, then goes on to pay fullsome tribute to her hospitality, her piety, and her love of the house of God. She followed in the tradition of Abbess Matilda by donating to the church several beautiful relics and reliquaries. **S26** lists the valuables held by the sacrist at the church at Wherwell in the time of Abbess Matilda de Littleton (1333-1340), and it is probable that this list of gifts includes those of the two great abbesses which were treasured by the abbey for generations.

Perhaps the most striking comments about both Matilda and Euphemia, are the references to their vigour and manliness. The poems quoted above in honour of Matilda stress this point. The same goes for Euphemia:

> With regard to outside affairs, she conducted herself both in deed and word in such a way that she seemed to have the spirit of a man rather than of a woman (**59**).

The attribution of male characteristics to a woman religious was regarded as highly complementary,[39] and clearly if women of the Bailleul family held positions of castellans in St. Omer, then they had a highly developed tradition of independence.

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[37] And indeed with other eminent clergy who held office at Wherwell. See Chapter 2.6., above.

It is clear from the obituary that Euphemia was extraordinarily energetic in pursuing the improvements to the abbey initiated by her aunt. The extent of the acquisitions made during her time have been outlined in Chapter 3.3 above. She completely rebuilt the abbey's manor buildings at Middleton and Tufton, but, most importantly, she made extensive alterations to the congested buildings and lay-out within the precincts of the abbey itself, improving the drainage and sewage facilities, building offices and outbuildings, and completely levelling the court yard by demolishing the old cottages clustered around the kitchen area, which she regarded as being a serious fire hazard (**59**). More importantly, she erected several impressive new buildings within the vicinity of the abbey: an infirmary, a dormitory, a hall, and a mill.

Reference has already been made in the Introduction to the recent survey of the site by Southampton University, and the surprise discovery that the present building, known as the 'Stables,' had origins in the thirteenth century. Edward Roberts has made a special study of this.[40] He noticed that the timbers of this building had substantial soot deposits, suggesting that it was originally an open hall.[41] Dendrochronological analysis of the timbers demonstrated clearly two dates for the felling of the timber, 1250 and 1280; thus the hall was built in two phases, the first phase in the 1250s, resulting in a hall with seven bays, the second phase in the 1280s, which brought the total number of bays to 10. Euphemia was still abbess in 1250, and the dating of the timbers coincides with an order given by Henry III to fell twelve oaks from the forest of Chute and give them to the abbess *ad reparacionem domorum*

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38 For a detailed picture of his career and family background, see *EEA IX*, 195-6.
39 Stafford (1998), 13.
40 Roberts *PHFC* (1998).

suarum. A similar grant was made in 1277 by Edward I, showing that Mabel de Tichburne (1262-1281) was developing the site further.[42]

Roberts considers that the weight of evidence suggests that 'The Stable' building was an infirmary building, started by Euphemia in the 1250s. His article argues the point closely, in particular drawing attention to the suitability of the location and comparing it to other known infirmary buildings, especially Carrow Priory, Norfok, and St. Mary's hospital at Chichester. A medieval infirmary of this date would be used to support not only sick and elderly nuns but also lay people and elderly servants of the abbey. The need for a building of size can be demonstrated by the competition for places. Poor and debilitated sisters and the parents and relatives of nuns were certainly to be given preference over wealthy women who were seeking to buy their place at the hospital.[43] We know that Euphemia maintained a special interest in maintaining the infirmary, because she made a grant of 4 marks for the use of the sick sisters in the infirmary (**63**), and 1 mark thereafter, each year on her anniversary.

The theory that the surviving 'Stables' is the old infirmary would be reinforced if a survey could find Euphemia's little chapel located 'behind the infirmary and *extra clausuram* of the monastery' (**59**). This further project of Euphemia's attracted the support of Beatrice de Faye, who granted a rent of 20s. *per annum* from rents in Artingdon, Surrey, to maintain a cantor at the chapel (**207**).

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41 See Part II, Fig.5.

42 *CCR 1254-56,* 252 and *CCR 1272-79,* 391.

43 Luce, *PHFC* Vol. 17 (1949-52), 31-44. Wherwell was sent a copy of these injunctions. For general comments on monastic infirmaries, see N. Orme & M. Webster, *The English Hospital 1070-1570* (Yale, 1995), 112 and R. Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys: An introduction to the religious houses of England & Wales* (London, 1958), 34.

The chapel, she said, was 'in the little meadow called St. Mary's garden.' (**254**). If traces of this chapel could be found, all doubts would be removed. We are left, however, just with an image of a charming and beautiful chapel and garden, in impeccable taste, built on Euphemia's initiative.

There remains a faint possibility, that 'The Stables' was not the infirmary, but Euphemia's new hall, also mentioned in **59**. Unfortunately the document does not go on to specify the use of the *aula*, so we cannot be certain of its scale. However, it could have been a guest hall which would reflect a close association with the local community, and mirroring the best standards in hospitality offered by wealthy lay people, which monasteries tended to emulate.[44] During Euphemia's day, Wherwell was at the height of its vigour, and the abbey was particularly noted for its hospitality, so much so that the Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury (1217-28), gave a special grant of 12 marks towards helping maintain the *hospitalitatis gracia* (**260**). This amounted to an appropriation by the abbess of a portion of the Collingbourne's income, over and above the usual pension. However, there is one strong argument against 'the Stables' being a guest hall : guest halls were invariably located on the western side of the complex, and this is to the south;[45] On balance, therefore, it seems more likely that 'The Stables' was indeed the infirmary. Perhaps it is significant that a *farmery* was noted as being worth preserving in 1539, whereas the hall is not.[46] Was this not the in*firmary* ?

Whether or not any of Euphemia's buildings can be correctly identified, the picture that the written sources give of Euphemia is that of a remarkable woman, of

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[44] Gilchrist (1994), 117-9, 127, 166 etc.

great energy, determination and charm. Not only was she a great administrator and imaginative developer, but she also took a great interest in national affairs. Since the end of the twelfth century, notable events had been entered in the *Kalendarium*, which, as we have seen, is almost certainly the remnants of her private psalter. It has marginal entries marking the wounding of King Richard; the announcement of the 1208 Interdict; the coronation and death of King John ; the death of Innocent III; Prince Louis's entry into London; the coronation of Henry III at Gloucester; the capture and death of notable men at the battle of Lincoln in 1217; hangings and imprisonments in1223 at Bedford, and so on, as well as the beautiful personal tributes to her beloved aunt.[47]

Euphemia died in April 1257, surrounded by members of the chapter. Her last act was to assign 13s. rent from land which she had bought in East Aston to be divided between the nuns at the convent and the care of the poor (**413**). Surely Cownie's key most important ingredient for a successful abbey - the personality of the abbess - were well met during the rule of Euphemia, as they had been by her aunt before her.[48] Meanwhile one of the grieving nuns she left behind wrote: 'She, who had attended so much to the good of the house when she was amongst us, has found due reward in heaven' (**59**).

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45 *ibid*, 119.

46 PRO E315/494, quoted by Roberts (1998), 149.

47 *Kalendarium* ff. 3, 5-10. There are inaccuracies of dating. The Siege of Bedford at which William de Bréauté, in support of his brother Falkes, defended the castle, lasted from June-August 1224. William, and the whole garrison of 80 knights and sergeants, were indeed hanged. See Carpenter (1990), 350-56, 360-67.

4.2. The Abbey's stewards

A surprising amount of information can be gleaned from the cartulary about the abbey's administrators, foremongst among whom were the stewards. Many of the charters are careful to record their presence in their witness lists, and although many from Euphemia's time are undated, nevertheless approximate dating is often possible, and in rare cases the dates are given. Examples are as follows. Those numbers that are underlined specify that the witness was steward at that time.

Stephen *de Candevra* Before 1221.[49]

Richard Makerell Definitely pre 1228 : **33,118,125,143,254,383,398**

Robert *de Querendon* Definitely steward in 1236 **22**. Other undated: **254**

Thomas Wayte **23** is definitely 1236-40. Undated **11,41**,43-4,**50**,148,226,234 **287**,371-**4,387,389**,394,**396**

Ralph Falconer 230 is dated 1240; **193** is dated 1244; **64,102-3** are dated 1254. **S29** is dated 1248. Others undated: **12,37,41**,45,**64,86**,87,**89**,91,**193**,**199** **202**,217,221,**259**,**287**,358,**388**-9,**419**,**S20**

Walter of Rombridge **16**-**17** both date 1257-60.

John Forester **24** dates 1256-62. Others undated **363**,**397**

Walter le Gras **13,160**,391,393 all 1260- 70

Geoffrey of Micheldever All charters undated, but around 1260-70: **20**,**24,26-7,86** 91,**376**,**378,271,276**

John *de Mortemer* Removed from office in 1279.[50]

Walter of Tichfield **160**,359,**360** all seem to date from 1262-81.

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[48] Cownie (1997), 52, 133-4.

[49] Stephen *Candeur, Candeura, Candewr,* does not appear in the Wherwell cartulary. The reference is from *Southwick I*, 94. In one of the two documents cited, Richard Makerel is a witness. Note that he himself was steward of Wherwell, probably immediately following Stephen of Candover.

	He is styled *receptor* in **393**
Philip *de Lutershulle*	263, **S28**
Richard *de la Bere*	**97** is dated 1302
Henry le Wayte	**171** is dated 1312; **175** 1316.

It seems from the above that stewards served - by accident or design - between five and ten years. They did not hold the post for life, and it is even less likely that the position was inherited. This begs the question of who was qualified to do such a demanding job. Were these men specially trained, or was any freeman touching on gentry status qualified to do accounts, manage men, be proficient in the law, and such like? The section below (4.3) on the Wayte family will attempt to explore this issue further. It does not seem that the Wherwell stewards were a peripatetic class of professionally trained men, rather they belonged to the local community. Several charters have two men as witnesses whom we know were later - or perhaps earlier - stewards themselves, for instance in **287** both Ralph Falconer and Thomas Wayte are witnesses, neither classed as steward in this particular document. **389** has both again, but with Thomas Wayte as steward. They clearly remained significant people within the Wherwell area whether or not they were holding office at that particular moment.

Ralph Falconer, for instance, represented the abbey in court at Winchester regarding the abbey's dispute with Alexander of Bullington over fishing rights (377-8). The cartulary records two main gifts which he made to the abbey, 1 mark of rent from land in East Aston in 1254 (**64**), and lands held in Wyke (**204**). The *magister Radulfus* in the *obit* list of the Wherwell *Kalendarium* probably refers to him and the

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[50] This dismissal was at the instance of John Pecham at the request of the nuns. It is reported in

absence of other entries to lay benefactors probably reflects the rarity of his action.[51] Ralph Falconer is marked by the frequency of documents associated with him, his apparently long term of office and his gifts.

John Forester is described in 397 as *clericus* and *senescallus* in **363**. Those in orders apparently were able to, and did, serve as steward. Another example of an ordained steward was Walter of Tichfield who was steward in the years in which Mabel of Tichburne was Abbess. Walter not only represented the Abbess in court, but others too; for instance he represented John *de Boklonde* in a case in Winchester[52] In 1272 both Abbess Mabel and Walter of Tichfield had to face charges of unlawful capture and imprisonment of one Thomas of Anne.[53] Walter pleaded that as a *clericus* he was not obliged to answer to the king's court.

The family whose connections shed most light on the social status of the abbey's stewards was the Wayte family. They are the subject of the following special study.

4.3 The Wayte Family[54]

Two men by the name of Wayte were stewards to Wherwell Abbey, suggesting that the family were establishing a tradition of being professional administrators. They plausibly belonged to one of those 'elusive clans' cited by John Maddicott which 'fell between mere freeholding and gentility.'[55]

Registrum Epistolarum John Peckham, Archbishop of Cant, RS 77, 1077.

51 *Kalendarium* f.2.

52 PRO JUST 1/1200 r.6

53 PRO KB 27/1 r.6.

54 For an earlier version of this chapter see R.P. Bucknill, 'The Wayte family of Hampshire,' *Family and Dynasty in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. Eales, Harlaxton Medieval Symposium Papers, 1997.

55 J. Maddicott, 'The county community and the making of public opinion in 14th.c. England', in *TRHS* 5th.Series, 28 (1978), 40.

The earliest Wayte to come clearly into focus is the Thomas Wayte who was steward to the Abbess Euphemia in the 1230s and again in the 1250s; he witnessed over 20 charters in this capacity. As noted above, he was definitely steward for three or four years between 1236 and 1240, but this term of office was bounded by Roger *de Querendon's* stewardship recorded in 1236 and the beginning of Ralph Falconer's in 1240. He must have served a second term as he headed a witness list of 1257 under the title steward of Wherwell (**400**).

Next there was Henry le Wayte; he is one of the best documented members of the Wayte family as he was the same Henry who was bailiff of the soke of Winchester and Twyford from 1285-1300. The soke of Winchester was the land held by the bishop on the outskirts of Winchester and was quite distinct from the city itself, where the burgesses and merchants enjoyed domination. Between 1300 and 1303 Henry le Wayte moved to manage a group of manors for the bishop in the north-west of the county which included Overton, Highclere and Burghclere.[56] After this, he returned to the soke and Twyford for another 2 years.[57] Henry is identified as bailiff of the soke of Winchester in several documents in the Winchester Muniment collection and in the bishop's register.[58] But by 1312 the cartulary shows that Henry had become steward of Wherwell (**171**); a second document which he witnessed as steward, is dated 1316 (**175**). Most interestingly, on one of the last pages of the cartulary, there is a laboriously copied text containing the details of the extent of the abbey's demesne

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56 Pipe Rolls of the Bishop of Winchester: HRO 11M59/B1/45-11M59/B1/56.

57 *ibid* HRO 11M59/B1/60

58 *WCM III*, nos. 1353; 1354; 1356. See too, *Reg. Pontissara* . 484, 590.

lands *de libro customario facto per H. le Wayte, senescallum in .iij. anno officii sui.*[59] Unfortunately the custumary has not survived.

Henry's life thus revolved around Winchester, north-west Hampshire, and finally Wherwell. By his marriage, however, it seems that he had close connections with the south of the county.[60] His wife was Alice Chickenhull, daughter of John and Beatrice Chickenhull who held the manor of Woolston on the Solent in Titchfield hundred. Alice's grandfather was Hugh de Chickenhull, sheriff of Hampshire from 1294-97, who died in 1317.[61] Henry le Wayte had stood out as being of sufficient status to provide a suitable husband for one of the Chickenhull daughters, and Henry was certainly a man of property. He had some tenements in Winchester, for instance, which he gave to his daughter Isabel. These were several messuages just outside the west gate.[62] This evidence that the Waytes held property in Winchester is further borne out by the fact that Edmund and Richard *le Waite* are associated with adjoining properties and remained so into the fourteenth century when yet another Wayte, Robert, is named.[63] Meanwhile the children of Henry, bailiff of the soke, are well documented and reinforce the impression that the family had wide contacts and abundant professional skills.

Examination of the Wherwell cartulary, however, reveals that there was another Henry le Wayte who was of particular importance to the abbey and community of Wherwell during the first decades of the fourteenth century. He appears in at least 40 charters between these dates, not as a witness, but as a major

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59 f. 218.v.

60 For a family tree of the Wayte, Chickenhull and *Ingepenne* families, see Part II, Fig. 18.

61 *CIPM I*, 105. Also, W. Berry, *Pedigrees of the Families in the county of Hants* (London, 1883).

62 *WCM III*, no. 1351. D. Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester II* (Oxford, 1985), 687 & 914.

mover of property. He was an ordained priest, he held one of the abbey's prebends, and he was a university graduate, almost always entitled *magister*. Henry's relationship to Henry the bailiff, is indicated by the details in **92**. *Magister* Henry had acquired 22 acres at *Toppemulle* in Middleton which he alienated to the abbey in 1323 *pro anima Henrici le Wayte, patris predicti magistri Henrici [le Wayte]*. These is no doubt that his father was Henry, one-time bailiff of the soke of Winchester, and lately steward of Wherwell.[64]

The career of *magister* Henry the future cleric, can be traced in the records without too much difficulty. He may have studied abroad, rather than Oxford, as he is invariably called *magister*, but he is not to be found in Emden. His first notable clerical appointment was to the church of Avynton, on the presentation of the bishop,[65] then in 1309 he became the prebendary priest of Goodworth Clatford; this time the abbess was patron, and in that same year he was admitted to the dependent chapel of Compton.[66] The high profile that he enjoys in the cartulary suggests that for years he was abbess Isabella de Wyntreshulle's (1298-1333) right hand man. The canon of Wherwell was the more prestigious, holding the richest of the four prebends attached to the abbey; but in Henry le Wayte's time, the prebend of Wherwell was held by a local man, Nicholas Talemach, who, according to the nuns, held the church *in absentia* for 20 years. Indeed, he gave the abbess so much trouble that she

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[63] *ibid* 689 & 917.

[64] **105** is a deed issued by Clement of Wolverhampton saying that he has sold all the grain in his buildings at Inkpen to Henry le Wayte. It is dated 28 September 1324. According to **92** Henry le Wayte died in 1323.

[65] This could either be Avyngton in the hundred of Fawley, or Avington in Berkshire, which has close links to Inkpen, *VCH Berks IV*. However, John *de Ingepenne*, who died in 1361 had property in *Aldyngton*. See below for Henry's connection with the *Ingpennes*.

[66] *Reg. Wood.*, 405, 721, 732.

initiated an effort to appropriate the parish church. The results were the valuable documents **54-57**. The cartulary records that Nicholas's church at Wherwell was falling into disrepair through his negligence and that he utterly neglected his duties. He was ultimately successfully removed for absenteeism.[67] In contrast the surviving architectural evidence at Henry le Wayte's church of St. Peter's, Goodworth Clatford reflects pride and purpose; it shows that a fine tower was being built in the first half of the the fourteenth century, which still stands today. From its style, one can deduce that it was built during Henry's time (Part II, Fig.17).

Magister Henry's importance to the abbey is best demonstrated by the land dealings that he became involved in on behalf of the abbess. Between 1314 and 1339, Henry purchased a total of 330 acres of land, and he alienated them all to the abbey **(83,82,73).**[68] Henry was certainly acting as an agent for the abbess. He clearly had a sharp administrative mind. The procedural complexities used for Henry's alienations served as a model for those employed twenty years after his death by the executors of William *atte Mulle* of Middleton.[69]

The date of *magister* Henry's death is uncertain. In 1331 John of Shaftesbury *presbyter* was granted seisin of the lands in East and West Bullington of Henry le Wayte (Gayte), the prebendary (**284**). Since John of Shaftesbury succeeded Henry as prebendary of Goodworth it suggests that his death occurred at this date. However, this cannot be so, as Henry was granted a meadow in Wherwell by John Godwyn in 1339 and the cartulary records Henry giving this to his nephew in the same year **(124,S14).** Most probably then, 1339 was the year in which he died. John,

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[67] *CPP I*, 211, 219. *CPR 1348-50*, 564.

meanwhile, had apparently been granted active possession of Henry's prebend in 1331, and was in position to succeed him to the full canonry. An entry regarding Henry le Wayte in the bishop's register for 1358 does not refer to this Henry, but perhaps his nephew, also called Henry.[70]

It is clear from the sources that *magister* Henry had two brothers and several cousins living around Wherwell. The 50 acres of arable and 4 acres of meadow in Bullington which Henry gave to the abbey in 1315 were family property which had been given to him personally by his brother Richard, who apparently resided nearby **(77,115).** It is not clear how much property Richard le Wayte retained in Wherwell hundred, but he was closely associated with the area, witnessing a charter in 1331 in Barton Stacey.[71] He might have been the Richard Wayte who was acting as the king's escheator in Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire in 1325. Another brother, Nicholas, features even more prominently in the cartulary. Though he is not cited as either a beneficiary or a donor of land, he is witness to at least 17 charters between 1323 and 1339. As a verderer of the Forest of Chute, he heard pleas of the forest presented at an inquisition at Andover in 1354,[72] and from another forest record we know that in 1334 he held land near the wood of Stonehanger, Abbot's Anne.[73]

Thus the Wherwell cartulary and other sources demonstrate that in the first decades of the fourteenth century, three sons of Henry, bailiff of the bishop of

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68 Also *CPR 1313-17*, 200; *CPR 1330-4*, 168. For details, see Chapter 3.4.

69 See below, in section on 'Local Donors.'

70 *Reg.Edington II*, 57. This contains a dimissorial letter dated November 1358. Dismissorial letters were not associated with a cleric leaving his parish, but rather were obligatory letters which any new candidate for the priesthood had to present to the bishop to demonstrate his status, wealth and reliability. *ibid I*, xi.

71 HRO 57M76ME/T6

72 PRO E32/169.

73 *ibid.* and *WCM* no. 2219.

Winchester, either lived or held lands in Wherwell and its surrounding villages. Furthermore, the family of Nicholas, at least, remained in the immediate area. In 1321 Abbess Isbella granted Nicholas and his wife Amicia, a life tenancy in 2 messuages and a virgate of land in Forton (**288**).[74] In 1339 *magister* Henry made a gift to 'Henry son of my brother Nicholas,' of a meadow in Wherwell. This may not have been his only grant as in this instance young Henry was expected to pay for a lamp in the conventual church from the proceeds of the meadow (**S14**). Nevertheless, the gift is a reminder of the fact that the Waytes had a strong sense of family obligation and affection. In the event of young Henry's death, the meadow was to go to Henry's other nephew, John *de Ingepenne*, whose family will now be explored. Meanwhile, the Wayte presence around Barton Stacey and Sutton Scotney lasted well into the next century.[75]

It has already been noted that in 1290 Henry le Wayte, bailiff of the soke of Winchester, married Alice Chickenhull. When their daughter Isabel married, they granted her several messuages in Winchester. Isabel's marriage was to Roger *de Ingepenne*.[76] There can be no doubt that Henry, Nicholas and Richard of Wherwell had a sister called Isabel. On one document, for instance, Henry and Isabel were jointly granted the manor of Woolston, which was the family property - or a family property - of their mother, Alice.[77] In 1331, Isabel and Henry were granted free

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[74] *CPR 1340 - 43*, 49.

[75] See R.P. Bucknill, 'The Wayte family of Hampshire,' *Family & Dynasty in Medieval England* ed. R. Eales (Harlaxton, 1997).

[76] *WCM* nos. 1353, 1353, 1356.

[77] *CIPM I*, 105; *VCH Hants III*, 298. A.R. Ingpen, *An ancient family: a genealogical study of the family of Ingpen* (London, 1916), 91-2.

warren there.[78] The Chickenhull alliance had therefore enhanced the status of the Waytes by bringing the manor of Woolston into the family. The *Ingepenne* marriage was to be even more beneficial. The families became so intertwined that it is appropriate to look at the *Ingepenne* family carefully. A study of their past will reveal what circles the Waytes moved into around 1300, and a study of their future shows how enduring the ties of kinship were between the *Ingepenne* and Wayte families.

Roger *Ingepenne*, husband of Isabel Wayte, was an able and prosperous wool merchant whose trade was based on Flanders.[79] He was five times mayor of Winchester, between 1303 and 1304 and between 1310 and 1311.[80] In 1314 he was appointed to attend the king's court and council at Westminster.[81] His status and reputation contributed to the secure future of his three sons, John, Robert and William.[82]

The *Ingepenne* family fortune was based on legal and mercantile skills developed in the late thirteenth century by Roger *de Ingepenne's* father, John *de Ingpenne* of Andover, who was married to Emma, and died in 1297. The town court rolls of Andover make continuous reference to him between 1278 and 1287, showing that he was a prominent burgess, wool merchant and landowner.[83] He was the son of another Roger *de Ingepenne*, *alias* Roger de Hida, and whose family line can be traced to Nicholas *de Ingepenne* of Inkpen in Berkshire, who flourished around

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78 *CChR 1327-41*, 86. *VCH Hants III*, 298.
79 *CCR 1307-1313*, 130, 145, 358.
80 *VCH Hants V*, 481. Keene (1985), 211, 227, 700, 1271-2. Ingpen (1916), 92-4.
81 *Rot.Parl.I*, 176.
82 Ingpen (1916), 77.
83 Andover In & Out Hundred Court Rolls: HRO 37M85 2/HC/4-10 etc.

1200.[84] Both Roger *de Ingepenne* of Winchester, and his distinguished cousin, Sir Roger *de Ingepenne*, Sheriff of Cornwall, who died in 1306 without children, can be traced back to Nicholas, who was enfoeffed by Gervaise Paynel. Sir Roger's wife was Emeline.[85]

It is possible that one of their family was found murdered near Wherwell around 1280. The record of this incident is in the unedited Eyre Roll of 1280.[86] Bearing in mind the strong connections of the *Ingepennes* around Andover and Wherwell and that the victim's name was Roger, one cannot help concluding that he must have been a close kinsman.

All this suggests that the *Ingepennes* were already a prominent merchant family in Hampshire when Henry Wayte arranged the betrothal of his daughter Isabel to Roger *de Ingepenne*. The *Ingepenne's* prosperity steadily increased in the fourteenth century and much of their property was intermingled with the Wayte family holdings in precisely the same areas of the county in which the Waytes flourished. This can be seen from the will of the son of Roger and Isabella, John *de Ingepenne*, who was also a prominent merchant.[87] Dated 1361, it shows that John *de Ingepenne* made bequests to the churches of both Middleton and Barton Stacey, revealing a personal link with the Wherwell area which must have been cemented by his contact with his uncles *magister* Henry, Richard and Nicholas le Wayte. Furthermore, John made Gavelacre his chief residence. This was where his uncle

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[84] *CPR 1281-1292*, 327. Ingpen (1916), 77-8. *VCH Berks IV*, 202.

[85] The importance of Gervaise Paynel is discussed ed in Chapter 3.2.above. Something of the extent of the family's property in Inkpen can be seen in **66.** Reference can be found there too, to Emeline's second husband, Thomas Randilou. See too, **183b.**

[86] PRO JUST 1/789, m.25; 1/784, m.12. *Rogerus de Inkepen inventus fuit occisus apud Culdbur.' Nescitur quis eum occidit.* Part II, Fig.15.

Nicholas held land from the abbess. John *de Ingepenne* got a licence to build an oratory there in 1357.[88] He also got one for the old Chickenhull manor house in Woolston which is described as amounting to 100 acres of arable, 5 acres of pasture and 5 acres of woodland. Woolston was now an ongoing asset of the *Ingepenne* family; the Wayte and Chickenhull inheritance having been subsumed into the *Ingepenne's*. Overall, the Inquisition shows that at John's death, he had had substantial property in Aldyngton, Freemantle, Cheriton, Alresford, Candover, Barton Stacey, the soke of Winchester and Andover. He also held 260 acres from the abbess of Wherwell *per fidelitatem et servicium.* It was John *de Inkepenne* who, together with Richard *de Cormailles*, was authorized to go to London to obtain a licence for the abbey to elect a new abbess following the death of Matilda de Littleton in 1340.[89] Thus although there is no mention of any of the *Ingepenne* family in the Wherwell cartulary, the abbey had the loyalty and support of one of its most significant members.

Of the two sons of John *Ingepenne*, the eldest, another John, eventually inherited Gavelacre and the second, Robert, inherited Woolston. Robert carried on the family tradition of being a merchant.[90] His success was equal to his father's. When Robert died in 1388, trustees transferred to his son Richard, all the lands, rents and services in Barton Stacey, Middleton, Gavelacre and Longparish 'then held by Isabella Coleshill, mother of the said Robert.'[91] All these were places where the Waytes held land. Leases made by young Richard of the lands he inherited in

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87 *WCM* no.1366; *CIPM XI*, 117.
88 *Reg. Edington II*, 44.
89 PRO C81/263/262. Part II, Fig. 16.
90 *CPR 1334-38*, 100, 443, 481.

Gavelacre, Forton Wherwell, Cheriton and elsewhere are recorded in the Winchester College Muniment Collection.[92] Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Ingepennes maintained a higher status than the Wayte family, but the interweaving of their properties suggests that strong ties of kinship remained. Possibly the *Ingepennes* enfeoffed the Waytes, or possibly they held their land of the abbey in return for all those years of service.

The evidence of the strong presence of the Waytes in the Wherwell area at the beginning of the fourteenth century is suggestive of there being some link between Thomas Wayte, steward of Wherwell in the 1230s and Henry, bailiff of the soke, latterly steward of Wherwell. The exact connection is uncertain. One possible link might be the Richard *Waite* who is recorded in the eyre rolls for 1249 and 1256 as elector of Bountisborough Hundred. There were other *Waites* in this area, for instance a Robert *Waite* was a jury man for nearby Stoke, surely Itchen Stoke in the same hundred.[93] The fact that the Bountisborough eyre roll for 1280 has a Henry le Wayte as bailiff suggests that this might have been the Henry le Wayte, later bailiff of the soke, but this is only conjectural.[94] Nevertheless the fact that Henry the bailiff called one of his sons Richard, reinforces the idea of a connection between Henry and Richard of Bountisborough.

The common occurence of the name Thomas in the early branch of the Wayte family also deserves examination. It opens the possibility that Thomas Wayte of Wherwell came from Southwick in Portsdown Hundred. No fewer than four

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91 *WCM* no. 1368.
92 *ibid* no. 1369.
93 PRO: JUST 1/776 r. 38v & 39r.
94 PRO: JUST 1/789 r. 42.

Thomas Waytes appear within the records of Southwick Priory between 1181 and 1290.[95] The likelihood of there being a connection between the Waytes of the north-west of the county and those of Southwick is reinforced by the marriage of Henry le Wayte, the bailiff, to Alice Chickenhull, because the Chickenhull manor of Woolston is so close to Southwick.

As for their way of life, it is perhaps easy enough to imagine the social, commercial and political lives of the merchants in the family, but less so the lives of some of the earlier Waytes, particularly those at Wherwell. It is worthwhile trying to answer a few questions regarding their standing in the county. This task is recommended by Christine Carpenter in her critique of those historians who hold to the idea of the power of the county community.[96] Did the Waytes see themselves as belonging to a county community based on Hampshire? Was the county the focus for their social intercourse or was it the hundred, the manor, the diocese or perhaps the market place ? Did they see themselves as being dependent on a lord, or were they more entrepreneurial and independent?

The Thomas Wayte who became steward of Wherwell in the 1240s would have had to be literate, indeed even hightly literate. Had he learnt this as a matter of course by virtue of being a landlord ? Was there such a thing as a professional training which he acquired, or did an apprentice system operate? Palmer argues that seignorial stewards and bailiffs dominated the county courts and were amongst the most skilled legal people working the the country.[97] This suggests a professional training implying that Thomas obtained much of his social definition from the place

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95 *Southwick I*, II, 154; 193; *II*, III 215, 292, 336, 397, 399, 707, 709, 710. etc.

where he was educated. Alas, we do not know where this was, but we can guess at the professionalism of his training from the extent of the responsibilities that were attached to the post of *senescallus* of Wherwell.

Within Wherwell hundred itself, it would have been he who presided over the manor court, if not also the hundred court, and as a professional administrator, he would have had to be familiar with the complexities of the law and of all the courts and their different procedures. As for his social circle, some of the transactions that he supervised on behalf of the abbey reveal the sort of people he was mixing with. The charters show that they were all local: the forester, the porter, the miller, the abbey clerics, the free tenants of the abbey. These were not men of national significance, but key members of the community in Wherwell hundred. Wherwell, at the time of Thomas Wayte, was a self-reliant community in its own right, dominated by the energetic and progressive Abbess Euphemia. Though undoubtedly Euphemia herself led the way in these remarkable projects, without a steward of calibre at her side, they would have been impossible to realise.

Service to the Bishop of Winchester, however, certainly enhanced Henry le Wayte's status, though there is no clear consensus as to the status of bailiffs in general as their responsibilities were hugely varied, depending on who was their lord. The recently edited 1302 Pipe Roll for the bishopric gives a vivid picture of the sort of responsibilities Henry le Wayte had as bailiff of the bishop of Winchester's northern manors.[98] He and the reeve administered the manors jointly and were accountable to the bishop's peripatetic steward and his clerk. Henry and the reeve had to deliver the

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96 C. Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England,' in *JBS* (1994).

profits of these manors personally each year to the palace of Wolvesey, together with a record of all receipts and expenditure. These would include details of rents, quittances, arrears and defaults of rent, costs relating to building expenses, farm equipment, fencing, carting and the like, and of course, wages. Profits from the farming operation and perquisites from the manor court had also to be recorded.[99] This is perhaps a reflection of the traditional responsibilites of the bailiffs on the bishop's estates. They presided at the sessions of the manor courts dealing with petty cases such as trespass of man or beast, defaults in ploughing, shearing, fencing, negligent labour services, breaking the assize of ale, raising the hue unnecessarily and such like. Perhaps, then, Henry would have been like the model bailiff described by the writer of the *Fleta.* Here the bailiff was exhorted:

> 'to rise early...not to be rebuked for the vice of indolence....go to view the fields at daybreak....visit the plough-teams of the demesne....supervise the mowers, reapers and carters.....see that the lands were prudently marled and manured.....supervise the mowing' and much more besides.[100]

This professional rural idyll contrasts with the picture conjured up by Drew in his study of the manorial accounts of St. Swithun's Priory in Hampshire. Here the prior had to be content with bailiffs who were unscrupulous opportunists, so much so that Drew concludes that bad management, oppression and embezzlement were endemic amongst the whole bailiff class.[101]

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97 R. C. Palmer, *The County Courts of Medieval England* (Princetown, 1982), 72, 119 etc.

98 *Pipe.Winch. 1301-2*, 91-99.

99 PRO SC 6/983/34. See Chapter 3.7. above.

100 *Fleta* ed. H. G. Richardson & G. O. Sayles, SS 72, Vol. 2 (1953), 244-247.

101 J. S. Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St. Swithun's Priory,' *Essays in Economic History II*, ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson (Economic History Series, 1962), 28-9.

Could Henry have been of such poor calibre as this? It seems unlikely. Although records suggest that the bishop's bailiff of the northern manors was granted only very modest lodging around Highclere, the principal manor in the group, and his fee was only £5 a year to be taken from the proceeds of this manor, plus a fur for summer livery, priced 3s., this surely underestimates his worth and his reward. Likewise although it is true that the social contact of those administering the rural manors officially was limited to the freemen and customary tenants and labourers of the manor, the bishop's senior official, like the steward, and possibly merchants of the market place, it seems certain that Henry enjoyed a wider social circle than this. After all, out of a total of 20 years of service to the bishop, only 3 were spent supervising the rural manors, which were themselves only a morning's ride from Winchester. Henry's life was therefore probably based in the city itself.

As bailiff of the soke, Henry did not carry much mud on his boots. Rent arrears for the bishop's numerous tenements dominated the returns and diplomatic skills were important as city politics could be heated. There was guild and trading conflict between the city of Winchester and the suburban soke, which made the administration of the soke politically sensitive.[102] The cosmopolitan life in Winchester was in sharp contrast to life on the northern manors. Italian wool merchants and foreign craftsmen jostled with local men in the streets of the city at the annual St. Giles' fair which belonged to the bishop and was an international event.

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102 *VCH Hants V*, 480-1. See too, Keene (1985), 72-5.

Within the family, not only did Roger *de Ingepenne* trade with Flanders, but his brother Ralph was attorney to a merchant of Lucca.[103]

During his working day in Winchester, Henry would have mixed with a much better educated range of people than those around Highclere. They were the professional elite of Hampshire. His fellow witnesses included the mayor and bailiffs and aldermen of the city, the treasurer of Wolvesey, and others.[104] It was presumably in this social setting that he met the *Ingepennes*, though conceivably they had a common place of education, such as one of the Cathedral Schools.[105] For this reason it may be that the most important centre of influence and advancement for Henry was the diocese rather than the county, especially so if Henry had been talent-spotted at a diocesan school; the alternative is that he learnt his skills in apprenticeship to his father and grandfather. It is not clear how the bishop's bailiffs were appointed. All we know is that from the evidence of the pipe rolls, the bailiffs of the bishop of Winchester displayed their strengths through administration, accounting skills, knowledge of farming practice and the market place, and through man-management, skills that were possibly learnt at schools within the diocese. If so, Henry' career was made by the bishop of Winchester.

The other suggestion is that posts like these were offered to men belonging to families of established wealth and influence. Maybe the bailiwicks were purchased at farm, again favouring the wealthy. The financial status of Henry le Wayte remains a bit of a mystery, but it has already been noted that Henry's marriage to

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103 *CPR 1307-13*, 188.

104 *WCM* nos. 1354, 1356 etc.

Alice Chickenhull implied that he was acceptable company in knightly society in his youth, perhaps even before he earned the status of bailiff of the soke. This marriage would have ensured that Henry was in touch with the political issues of the day which were very much to the fore during the last years of the reign of Edward I. The Chickenhulls held their land in sergeanty of the king, so Hugh Chickenhull was obliged to give military service in the campaign against the Scots in 1300.[106] This is evidence of the status of the Chickenhull family, but it is also a reminder that although the Waytes and their kin appeared rooted in the county of Hampshire, they could not escape involvement in the big issues of the day.

Returning to consider *magister* Henry le Wayte, canon of Wherwell, we have seen that he followed in the family tradition of becoming a professional administrator, though his career was based in the church. Accordingly the diocese was a far more important focus for him than either the county, city or hundred. Unlike the Wherwell canons of an earlier generation, he never witnessed charters. In this sense he stands a bit aloof from the day to day running of the hundred, and from the abbey's labourers and tenants. We have noted how diligent he was at furthering the abbey's affairs by organising the deeds of alienation in favour of the abbey. Probably he fraternized with and was supported by the *Ingepennes*. One suspects, too, that he was an active agent in furthering the affairs of his own family. For instance Peter *de Ingepenne* recieved the prebendal church of Bathwick, Somerset, belonging to Wherwell in 1329. Peter was a bachelor of civil and canon law, and in 1343 he took possesssion

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105 In the 12th. and 13th. centuries every cathedral was obliged, by canon law, to have a school, though they later declined in number. W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the 14th. century* (Cambridge, 1955), 29, 109-112.

of another of Wherwell's prebends, that of Middleton. This attracted accusations that he could not be entitled to two prebendal stalls at the same abbey. In fact such was the scandal surrounding this appointment that the pope became involved, and Peter was forced to stand down.[107] The name of Peter's parents is not recorded, but his appointment seems worth mentioning because of his good education and above all his success in getting positions pertaining to Wherwell where Henry le Wayte was the leading prebendary priest and where many of his family held land. Henry had probably played a part in Peter's appointment, either on account of his relationship with the abbess or on account of the position of respect that he held within the church in the diocese, which reflected on his family. This case is perhaps an illustration of the danger of the dominance of local family interests within either cathedral or monastic chapters. Arguably it was this clogging parochialism which justified the readiness of successive popes to make provision to outsiders.[108] Papal intervention would undoubtedly endanger the interests of families like the Waytes who were building up substantial local hegemony. More positively one can argue that the service of people like them made for good relationships between the abbey and the Hampshire landed community as a whole.

In summary, it seems that the Wayte family is represented by both conservative rootedness and by energetic opportunism. They apparently combined substantial land holding in Hampshire with entrepreneurial ambition. Although

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106 *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. F. Palgrave (Record Commission, 1830), *Vol I*, 672; *Vol II*, 296, 399. *Book of Fees I*, 74; 341; 699; 1366; 1419.

107 *CPP I*, 98. *CPR 1343-5*, 28, 35. See too Coldicott (1989), 57.

108 This issue is widely discussed in G. Barraclough, *Papal Provisions* (Oxford, 1935); R. Brentano, 'Localism and Longevity,' in K. Pennington & R. Somerville, eds. *Law, Church and Society* (Pennsylvania, 1977), and F. Cheyette, 'Kings, courts, cures and sinecures,' *Traditio* 19 (1963).

some remained landowners and farmers, others sought, and found, social advancement through professional qualifications and through proven service to Wherwell Abbey and the bishops of Winchester. Thus if there was any one grouping with which they might have felt special affinity , it was probably the church; after all, for Thomas Wayte and the two Henrys, service to the church was the primary engine for their advancement. There is little to suggest that they identified themselves with a county community, if such a thing existed, though their holdings appeared to be almost exclusively in Hampshire. The tenacity with which the family held to its lands suggests that they strongly identified with the manor, the hundred and their own kin. The family spirit which emerges from this study is more recognisably the spirit that Alan Macfarlane identified in 1979: entrepreneurial, ego centred, socially mobile, but at the same time devoted to the land and bound by strong ties of kinship.[109]

4.4. The Forester and Sutton families

A large amount of Forester land was alienated to the abbey in the fourteenth century (73), accordingly there are a large number of back up charters which give clues to the source of the property. The details are very complex; this is partly because of the interweaving of the families, most especially because around 1290, Roger Forester married Annora of Sutton, daughter of one of the wealthiest residents in the community.[110] The Sutton family interests lay in Sutton Scotney, Bullington, Barton Stacey and Wonston; the Foresters' in Bathwick, Wyke, Bullington and

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109 A. Macfarlane, *The origins of English Individualism* (New York, 1979).

110 See tree, Part II, Fig. 19.

Wherwell. A study of these two families can shed a lot of light on Wherwell's neighbouring communities and their relationship to the abbey.

As their name implies, the Forester family were the abbey's foresters. **228** records that Thomas of Wyke son of Geoffrey Forester quitclaimed his right and claim to have the custody of Harewood. Geoffrey the Forester is named as forester in 1168.[111] In **417** Thomas explains that the office of forester belonged to himself and his heirs, though the Abbess and convent nevertheless retained the power to confirm or deny him this office. These are two of the earliest documents in the cartulary and probably date from the 1220s. Thomas had at least two children, Peter the elder, his heir, and Mary. Mary, was a benefactor of the conventual church; sometime between 1237 and 1256 she granted it an annual rent of 20s. from some property in Heckfield, for the salvation of her soul and of her ancestors and successors (**11**).

When Peter the elder died in 1254, his widow Beatrice, successfully purchased the marriage rights of their son, who was also called Peter. Although Thomas, and probably Peter the elder, lived at Wyke, St. Mary Bourne, Beatrice came from Bathwick in Somerset and sought help in her widowhood from family and associates there (**102-3**). The Foresters retained land in Bathwick as is evident in the confirmation of a licence to alienate given to Peter the elder's grandson, John, in 1319 (**364**). This specifies what must have been a substantial tenement embracing meadows, pastures, woods and rents. All was to pass into the hands of the abbey.

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111 *PR, 14 Henry II.*

The Foresters also had lands in Wherwell. Because so few of the charters of the thirteenth century are dated, and because of the confusion caused by there being both a father and a son called Peter, it is not easy to decide whether the documents reflect transactions completed at the time of Peter the elder and Beatrice, or of Peter the younger, but the majority of documents probably belong to the younger generation.

Peter the younger and his wife, Matilda, for instance, acquired a tenement from John Tredgold at a cost of £20, consisting of lands, meadows, woods, ponds, pastures, lanes and ditches (**357**). They also gained from a gift of 4 acres in the open field in Wherwell (*campo de Wherwell*); the strips are spelt out in detail. For this they paid 12 marks (**361**). Peter obtained a further messuage, croft and appurtenances and a curtilage in Wherwell, paying 16 marks cash down to meet the expenses of the vendor (**360**). Another one and a half acres of meadow was bought in Wherwell from John son of Thomas for 40s. cash down (**363**), and 9 more acres followed in various strips in Wherwell as a purchase from Richard, son of Adam Faber for which 30s. was paid (358). The total acreage featured in these documents is small, being not much in excess of 15 acres, though they included some extensive messuages and appurtenances whose size is not specified. Total cost £31. 10. 0d.

These transactions demonstrate that Peter Forester the younger was a substantial freeman of the village, and was able to accumulate sufficient wealth to add to the family holdings in the last decades of the thirteenth century. The size of the Forester lands which were ultimately alienated to the abbey suggest the family had become comparatively wealthy.

Peter the younger himself certainly had status. The fact that he was so frequently witness to charters in the cartulary attest to this. Peter was associated with over 50 documents, often as a witness. He was also elector of the Jury representing the Wherwell Hundred during the Eyre of 1280-1.[112] This was a very responsible job. At this hearing the jury had to present the Abbess's claims to the control of the Hundred, which would have been a demanding experience in the crowded court room at Winchester, under oath. The responsibility of the jurymen was to make the judge aware of any infringements of liberties that the abbess might have taken to the detriment of the king, for instance, they raised the issue of the Abbess having recently opened a Tuesday market, and claimed they did not know by what right she had done this. The Abbess was forced to account for this. There is no reason to suppose that Peter was anything but a stalwart and responsible member of the Wherwell community and that the Abbess enjoyed his respect, but potentially there was a clash of interests, with Peter in effect being asked to serve two masters: the abbey and the king (as his representative).

The key family member who surrendered so much land to the abbey was one of Peter and Matilda's three sons, Roger Forester. He and his brothers, John and William came to maturity around 1300-10. In 1329, John renounced all his claims on his father's property in both Wherwell and Bathwick to his brother Roger (**364**). This was probably some years after their father's death, so presumably John had been responsible for these tenements during the main part of his life and had seen them through the notoriously difficult years of dearth, especially 1311, 1317-19 and

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112 *ibid.*

1322.[113] In 1330 the third brother, William, can be identified as the heir of Roger Forester. In January 1330, William granted all rights which he may have had on Roger's land to Henry le Wayte (**341**), allowing a complicated scheme of sale and lease-back to go ahead, which ultimately favoured the abbey. On 25th February the Forester lands in Wherwell, Sutton Scotney, and East and West Bullington were given - or rather sold - by Roger to Henry le Wayte (**285**). Within two days, he had also sold all the goods and chattels on the property to Henry for 200 marks (**131,136**). However, Roger still intended to remain on his property, for on February 26th. Henry demised to Roger all those very same lands which he had just bought. The scheme was that Roger was to retain possession of the lands for the rest of his life, but on his death they would go to Henry and his heirs (**135**). Henry paid £280 for Roger's lands, and he had to provide surety of £1,000. Within 18 months Roger was dead. On September 8th. 1331 Henry le Wayte acquired a licence for alienation 'to provide a chaplain to pray daily in the church at Wherwell for the souls of Roger Forester, his wife Annora, his father, mother and children.'(**73**)[114] The reason that William was his brother's heir is now apparent. Roger and Annora had already lost their own children. This document also shows the extent of the properties: there were 9 messuages, 200 acres of land, 10 acres of meadow and 36s.8d in rent. By entering into this scheme with Henry le Wayte, Roger had gained financial benefit in his dying years, his soul was assured peace, and the abbey's prestige and purpose was enhanced by the addition of a considerable amount of important property. This scheme was of no benefit to Henry personally, rather he was acting as an agent of the abbey

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113 M.M Poston ed. *Cambridge Economic History: Agrarian Life in the Middle Ages* (1966), 565.

The money would have helped Roger or his executors clear up any debts which he might have incurred. Certainly in his time he had had to weather various difficulties. Not only had farming gone through several severe periods of crisis over recent years, but Roger had got into trouble with the law. In 1313 he was brought before the Commissioners of Oyer and Terminer for breaking and entering the property of Gilbert de Bromlegh, one of the king's clerks, at Monk's Sherbourne. He was found guilty of stealing two horses worth £20 and goods and chattels worth 100s.[115] In 1318 Roger had to answer to a royal writ concerning a plea by the Bishop of Winchester that Roger had failed to repay a debt of 40 marks.[116] Roger had also been forced to borrow money from his father in law, Alan of Sutton. There is therefore some possibility that Roger was in financial difficulties.

A critical point which can be gleaned from these documents, is that in spite of the reference to their children, the Forester lands passed into the hands of the abbey. Alan of Sutton's will confirms the existance of Roger's children. Alan had a sister called Alicia and a wife by the same name. He makes no mention of any sons in his will, but he did have two daughters, one of whom was Annora, who married Roger Forester, and to their three sons he gave legacies of 40s. each, just slightly less than he gave to his five other grand-sons, the sons of his other daughter Joanna and her husband Richard of Sutton (**219**).[117]

One son, at least, grew to maturity. In 1324, Alan, son of Roger Forester, defended his possession of a tenement in Meonstoke, showing incidentally, how the

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114 *CPR 1330-1334*, 168.
115 PRO Patent Roll 7 Edward II, Part I. C66 140, 4d.
116 *Reg. Sandale*, 221.

family spread out,[118] but the records are otherwise blank. We can only be certain that Roger and Annora had outlived their own children, enabling the abbey to eventually get possession of these valuable lands.

Alan's will offers valuable insight into his status. It spells out the extent of his prosperity, his valued possessions and property, and his social and religious values. He allows the large sum of £10 to be set aside for funeral expenses; he collected some valuable personal treasures, such as a precious shrine and some silver plate, and it shows he had furnished his private chapel with valuable items which he wished to remain in the family chapel. He bequeathed a total of £4. 1s. 3d to the care of the poor and he took care to provide for the chaplains of the three chapels Wonston (*WonSutton*), Sutton and Bullington, as well as ensuring that his own private chaplain was adequately maintained. The abbey itself was not left anything in Alan's will; one might reflect that by maintaining his own private chapel he felt secure of eternal salvation. It seems too that he considered the poor were better served by the leper houses than by the abbey. It also suggests that the growth of private chapels had a detrimental effect on the established monasteries.

Returning to the family, Roger Forester was apparently well accepted by his father-in-law as he was appointed one of the executors of Alan's will, the others being his brother-in-law, Richard of Sutton and Alan's own widow, Alicia.

Does the cartulary shed any light on Alan of Sutton's background ? The documents reveal that he, his father Robert, and his grandfather, another Alan, all increased the family holdings in Bullington through various purchases, gifts and

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117 **353** notes that Richard of Sutton gave Roger & Annora Forest *omnia tenementa mea que Johanna*

acquisitions.[119] The most important document shows that Robert represented the abbess of Wherwell at Westminster in 1242 (405), demonstrating the close association of the abbey with its prosperous and educated neighbours. It is probably for this reason that the abbess gave him a virgate of land in Bullington, which he was to hold through paying homage and service (**89**).

The printed records are more informative. Alan gave witness on more than one occasion at the *Quo Warranto* proceedings;[120] he was also present at the perambulation of the forest ordered by Edward I in 1300, together with Edmund and Richard of Sutton.[121] It has already been noted that Richard had married Alan's daughter, Joanna. From 1300 onwards it is Richard who features most frequently in the records, for instance as a juryman in the eyre of 1305.[122] Richard's lands are noted in a long list drawn up by Bishop Woodlock in his effort to sort out the affairs of Barton Stacey church.[123]

There was much movement of property between various members of the family after Alan's death. Richard and Joanna gave some tenements and rents that had been Joanna's inheritance to her sister, Annora, in exchange for some other Winchester tenements which had been given to Annora by her father (**368**). Richard also made legal arrangements for Roger and Annora to take seizin of the tenements which his wife Joanna had inherited from Alan of Sutton in Bullington (366).

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uxor mea acciderat post mortem Alani de Sutton patris sui

118 PRO KB 27/260

119 221, **86**-90 are probably all 1250-60. Later, both Robert and Alan and Alicia gained more (214-5, 225)

120 *PQW* (1881), 766, 769.

121 *Southwick I*, I 190.

122 PRO JUST 1/791.

123 *Reg. Wood.*, 452.

Laurence *atte Marshe* did the same with his lands (365,367). These last two documents are of some interest as Laurence *atte Marshe* was specially mentioned in Alan's will as being under his protection. In her widowhood, Johanna quitclaimed two other parcels of land that in their lifetimes, Roger and Annora had held. Some in Wherwell and Newton Stacey (**137**), and some in Bullington (**345**).

By 1331 Richard was dead, coincidentally around the same time that Roger Forester died. Roger's children had already gone. Did the five sons of Richard of Sutton and Johanna, referred to in Alan's will, survive ? The cartulary suggests that Edmund and Peter de Sutton, were two of them. Edmund was a witness in the Wherwell cartulary on a dozen occasions between 1310 and 1323, but made no specific grant himself. Wider sources, however, provide a picture of a notable local figure. In 1315, for instance, he was collector of scutage for Hampshire[124]. In the following year Edward II ordered that a list of names of the holders of the all the vills be recorded, and Edmund of Sutton is named as one of two principal holders of Sutton Scotney in the Hundred of Barton Stacey.[125] However, according to the cartulary, Edmund, too, died around the same time as Richard, Roger and the Forester boys. We know it was around 1328, as his widow, Alicia, and the trustees of Edmund's estate were involved in a dispute over Edmund's will.[126]

There are also several charters in the cartulary which pertain to Peter of Sutton's role in 1331. The most important one concerned a virgate of land in Wherwell occupied by Peter of Sutton *de dono* Henry of Upavon, which Henry le

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124 *Southwick* II, *III* 75.
125 *CFA 1284-1431*, 311; *Nom.Vill.* 26-7.
126 PRO CP 40/274, f.14d.

Wayte ordered Thomas of Micheldever to sieze on his behalf.[127] There are other charters representing agreements and exchanges between Peter and Henry le Wayte.[128] **344** shows Peter of Sutton attempting to reclaim land which had previously been Roger and Annora's. Peter of Sutton was in the forefront of representing the remaining family's interests.

The Sutton and Forester documents show how closely the leading families of the vills around Wherwell were entwined. During the years 1328-1331 much tragedy occurred in the family through loss of life, and the potential for sudden enrichment of the survivors through unexpected inheritence was no doubt matched by mixed feelings when large chunks of land passed from them to the abbey.

4.5. Men of the vills

The freemen of Wherwell hundred represent the majority of the cartulary's witnesses. As would be expected, the jurymen recorded on the thirteenth-century Eyre rolls are the same men.

All of the jurymen for Wherwell hundred who occur in the Eyre roll of 1249, JUST 1/776, are frequent witnesses in the cartulary:

Walter Erkebande	**25,26,27**,45,263,289,290,358,**S28**
Geoffrey of Bullington	45,221,226,362,372,**375**,385-**6**,390,395,**398,400**,403
Eustace of Gavelacre	A total of over 33 entries[129]
William of Anne	**13,14,20,34,288,419,S25**
Adam of Goodworth	**14,20,34**,43,**360-1,382,397,419**
Robert Pagan.	119,**196**,263,372

It is perhaps worth noting that one of the two electors, Clemens of Wherwell, does not once appear in the cartulary. It was possible to have status, prominence and

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[127] 336,

presumably land in Wherwell without being closely involved with the abbey. Another point to note is that Walter Erkebande appears as a juryman for Andover in the same Eyre roll. **25-7** show that Walter held the hereditary office of kitchener, which he later resigned (**S28**). This is of some interest in considering the status of men of that office, and it also shows that being closely involved with the abbey did not preclude interests and responsibilities outside the hundred.

In JUST 1/778, the eyre roll for 1256, the bailiff of the jury was Godwin of Harewood. Like Clemens of Wherwell, he is unknown. The rest of the jurymen are familiar as are several from the neighbouring hundreds of King's Sombourne and Barton Stacey, in particular William *de Sancto Vittore* (**16,19,26,27**,226,395) and Robert *de Fraxino*, (87,213,226,362,391,402,403).

By 1280, JUST 1/784, more involvement of the Andover jurymen is apparent. For instance the Andover bailiff, Geoffrey *de Molendinarius* features many times, also Walter Marisco, Henry of Foxcote, Thomas Spyrecok (84,98,**110,122,198**,227,289,290), Roger of Clatford (177,**296,297**) and Edmund Cormailles.[130] The Wherwell bailiff was Richard Covenant (119,**257**,412). Baldwin *de Knytebrugge* is from the family who probably held one of the mills in Middleton (**196,197,200,357,361**). He was certainly from Middleton. Adam and John *de Knytebrugge* also feature in the cartulary, and Adam was conspicuous for his unlawful pursuit of game in Harewood Forest.[131]

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128 333,337,348

129 See n.133 below.

130 The Andover Town Gild Rolls also provide evidence of these men's activities and concerns. C.Gross, *The Gild Merchant, II* (Oxford, 1927), 4-9, 289-297 etc.

131 See Chapter 5.3. below.

Millers were clearly prominent in the community; the miller from each vill regularly serves on the jury for the Eyre, and are high up on the list of witnesses. The appearance of Ralph of Gavelacre in the 1280 Eyre, gives an opportunity to note the prominence of this manor at Forton and its holders. Eustace was witness to at least sixteen charters, Ralph of Gavelacre to over thirty, and Walter to at least a dozen.[132] Ralph was elector of the jury in 1280/1 JUST 1/785, together with the ubiquitous Peter Forester, son of old Peter the Forester.[133] The manor of Gavelacre was the ultimate home of John *de Ingepenne* as has been noted above. There is also a Berkshire connection. The Gavelacre documents show that Eustace of Gavelacre and his wife Matilda held land in Compton, Berkshire, which the abbess gained in exchange for the mill and 4 acres of land at Forton (**38**). It is possible that Eustace was merely the miller and not the holder of the manor of Gavelacre, but in any event Eustace of Gavelacre had to mortgage his tenement in Forton for 25 marks, suggesting that there may have been financial difficulties (**50**), and by 1361 the mill and various lands had passed into the hands of Roger Huse who had substantial lands in several counties.[134]

Not all the land holders around Wherwell were local, however. Three documents record that lands in Bullington once belonged to a citizen of London, Gilbert Thorne (**115,116,120**). These came into the hands of Richard le Wayte, then Henry le Wayte and thence to the Abbey (**121,76,77**).

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[132] Eustace:**11,37,41**,87,226,239,390,358,**374,387,388**,390,**398,400**,402,**419.**
Ralph: **16-7,19-21,25**,90,**110**,119,214,225,**257**,263,289,**357**,359-**61,368**,371,**376,380,382,397**,401, 384,391,**200.** Walter: **77**,84,98,253,**253,309,353**.

[133] There are numerous documents in the cartulary featuring Peter Forester, for instance: **11,13,14,16, 22,37-8,41**,44-5,**86**-7,90-1,**102,110**,119,**125**,148,**160,196,199,200-1,303**,214,221,225-6,230,239,**254, 257**,263,**287**,289,358-**61**,372,**376,380,382**,384,**387**-393, **397,400**-2,412,**419,S20,S28-9.**

An analysis has already been made of the Forester and Sutton families, demonstrating the extent of their landholdings and their inter-relationships. There are also large numbers of documents relating to two prominent families in Bullington. The first group relate to property belonging to the miller, Geoffrey of Bullington, and the second the family of Thomas of Bullington. The abbey was to acquire property from both families.

Between 1226 and 1257, Geoffrey of Bullington gave an acre of land in Wherwell in free alms to God and the abbey (**372**),[135] for the souls of himself, his forbears and his descendents.[136] In addition to the gift in free alms, Geoffrey sold an acre to Abbess Euphemia for 2 marks (**398**). Geoffrey was one of two sons of an Alexander of Bullington who was the deforciant in the dispute with Abbess Euphemia over fishing rights at Bullington (**377**). Alexander was married to Sybilla, a sister of Robert fitz Pagan of Bullington (390), who held several knight's fees in Wiltshire in 1242-1243, and featured in several charters in the cartulary.[137] It seems, though, that Alexander was married twice, for **389** refers to Alexander's widow, Christine. On the other hand, conceivably Alexander bore the same name as his father, in which case Christine would have been his mother. Alexander's other son, Ralph was a witness to this same charter. The document laying out the details of the fishing dispute makes it clear that Alexander had both a mill and an extensive garden in

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134 See above, and *CIPM XI*, 67.

135 This was later quitclaimed by Geoffrey's son, William (**388**).

136 E.G. Kimball, 'Tenure in Frankalmoign and Secular Service,' *EHR* (1928), 348. B. Thompson, 'Free Alms tenure in the twelfth century,' *Proceedings of the Battle Conference XVI*, ed. M. Chibnall (1993), 224-229.

137 1 in *Sichet* or *Ciklet* and portions of knights' fees in *Depeford*. *Book of Fees II*, 715, 720 & 734

Bullington in 1241, which Geoffrey inherited.[138] Geoffrey himself was a juryman representing both Wherwell and Somborne in the eyre of 1249, attaining a higher status than his father, as he was *elector* of the Wherwell jury.[139]

Geoffrey's grant to the abbey are not really typical, in the sense that it was rare for the abbey to be the beneficiary of land given by local people, yet there was no such thing as a typical family. Geoffrey's family held a privileged position in local society; they were active members of the community, being frequent witnesses to the Wherwell documents: Geoffrey himself seven times; Alexander nine times; William, Geoffrey's son, once. In the 1240s he made an agreement with Euphemia over grazing rights for 4 oxen (239).

There is a second grouping amongst the Bullington documents from which it is possible to pick out a second family who are not obviously related to Alexander of Bullington. The family and documentation all stem from a Thomas of Bullington who appears in twenty of the thirteenth-century charters in the cartulary, eight of which concern him directly. (Part II, Fig. 20). The status Thomas enjoyed as a young man is referred to in the charter which sees him making over to the abbey the lands which he had received as a gift from Robert Payn when he had married Robert's daughter, Annora (**376**); Thomas had married a very respectable woman, Annora Payn. The Payn family held land in both Sombourne and Barton Stacey [140] and Robert and Ralph Payn were on all the jury lists of the Eyre rolls already cited. Thomas of Bullington's family connections were therefore comparable to Alexander of Bullington's, and there were clearly substantial land holdings to enjoy. A

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138 e.g. the jury list of 1256. PRO JUST 1/778.

fourteenth-century indenture spells out the extent, or perhaps the partial extent, of Thomas's landholding in the century before. It refers to 2 virgates of land within the manor of Bullington (which were acquired later by the abbey), and a further 2 virgates (which were acquired by Peter of Sutton), plus additional grazing rights (**373**). Thomas had apparently been reasonably provided for.

The earliest dated reference to Thomas suggests that, in spite of his comfortable background, he was not good at managing his business affairs. This comes in the Eyre roll of 1236 when the Alexander of Bullington noted above, called Thomas of Bullington, together with his son William and his wife Hawisia, to answer to a charge of broken pledge. Thomas was found guilty and was amerced.[141] There are grounds for thinking that Thomas of Bullington got into financial trouble quite early on. He appears to have sold, for instance, 2 virgates of land to the largest landholder in Sutton Scotney, as reference to this turns up in a document dated 1329 (**373**). He made an agreement with the Abbess whereby he pledged his land to her in return for her paying off his debt of two marks which he owed Mabel of Scoteney (**383**). Richard Makerel was the Abbey's steward, making it likely that Thomas incurred this debt during the late 1220s.[142] Another piece of evidence suggesting that Thomas suffered from debts occurs in a charter made in favour of Alan Long of Sutton on the occasion of the marriage of Alan to Thomas's daughter, Annora. Thomas sold one messuage and 28 acres of land to his new son-in-law, who in return agreed to pay off his debts to the Jews (**379**). Thomas retained the lordship of this

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139 PRO JUST 1/776

140 *CFA 1284-1431*, 323.

141 PRO JUST 1/775, m.21d.

142 Mabel of Scotney held half a knight's fee in Sutton (Scotney), 1242-3. *Book of Fees II*, 708.

land (the agreement was that Alan paid 5s at Michaelmas and 2d. at the festival of St. Thomas to his father-in-law). It is interesting to observe that the marriage contract between Annora and Alan Long was so beneficial to Thomas in terms of helping him with his financial problems, yet the downside was the reduction in his landholding, and thus his future income. This reduction in scale was compounded by the fact that Thomas had another daughter, Edonia, to provide for appart from Annora. Thus we see Thomas giving, not selling, 9 acres of land to John, son of William *de la Forde* when he married Edonia (**386**). No mention is made of Edonia's new husband having to meet any of his father-in-law's debts, as Alan Long had been persuaded to do, but Thomas, perhaps needing extra funds, sold an additional virgate to John for homage and service, for 100s., though, as with the land acquired by Alan, Thomas retained his lordship (**375**). Thomas's own son, also called William, probably inherited land from his father. He features in 385, where he gives 8 acres of land to Robert *de Brimarton*; perhaps part of the land that he inherited from Thomas.

Unlike Alexander and Geoffrey of Bullington, therefore, Thomas appears to have been under financial pressure and reliant on his sons-in-law to help him out. It is not possible to gauge whether this was through mismanagment, the need to provide for two daughters, or some other misfortune. If a study is made of all the charters relating to his family, it can be seen that whereas, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.4., the Forester family seemed to come to grief through lack of heirs, Thomas of Bullington's family may well have come to grief through having too many children.

On examination, an extraordinary number of the Bullington charters relate in some way to Thomas of Bullington's family. Edonia's marriage to John *de la Forde*

is mentioned several times in the cartulary. John's father William (John is often referred to as John *filius* William *de la Forde*), was killed by a horse in sufficiently worrying circumstances for his death to be brought before the justices in Eyre at Winchester, where albeit they returned a verdict of misadventure (*infortuniam*).[143] John and Edonia had a daughter Agnes who required provision (395), and there was probably a son, Geoffrey, eleven times a witness. The cartulary indicates that John *de la Forde* died, leaving Edonia a widow, for she reappears married to John Iuvenis, at least she is cited as John's widow, and she is seen to be giving away the remnants of her small fortune to the abbey in free alms (**374**). This was the 9 acres given by Thomas of Bullington to John *de la Forde* when he married Edonia (**386**).

There is some evidence that John Juvenis himself ran into difficulties. He worked out a deal to lease some lands to Robert of Sutton after a *magnum negotium* (**86**), and the rest of his land ended up in the hands of the abbey, perhaps on account of his ill health, for when he was renegotiating the services owed to the abbess, as he insisted that he should not be compelled to do carting against his wishes (**400**). Thomas Wayte was steward at this time, so it probably occurred in the 1240s. He conceded the inheritance that he had from his father (also called John Iuvenis) to the abbey, in free alms, around the same time (**387**). Finally we learn that he and Edonia had given two and a half acres of arable land and a messuage to the abbey in exchange for 14s to relieve their great need (**396**).

The fortunes of Edonia's sister Annora can also be followed in some detail. Alan Long came from Sutton. The records which he and Annora leave behind show

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143 PRO JUST 1/776.

them, too, giving up the land which Thomas had given them on their marriage. They had divided the original 28 acres in two. Firstly they sold 14 acres, plus grazing pasture, to the Bruin family of Winchester (**381**); and in her widowhood, Annora finally gave up all her residual rights on this land (**380**). The other 14 acres were sold by Alan Long and Annora to the Abbess Constancia for 10 marks sometime between 1259 and 1262 (**397**). This was half of the marriage portion so carefully detailed in **379**. Within a few years Annora was a widow, and quitclaiming her rights on what was probably the same land in Bullington to Abbess Mabel (**399**). It looks as if Annora was seeking relief in her old age. Her charters represent the final chapter of the Bullington family holdings of the middle of the thirteenth century. As a whole they suggest a family that was struggling. Thomas himself ended up dependent, for in **376** he is seen giving away to the abbey all the lands he had received from his father-in-law on the occasion of his marriage to Annora Payn, in return for which he received an allowance for himself and Annora in their old age. Furthermore, Thomas had apparently outlived both of his sons-in-law, for at the end of his life he quitclaimed his rights and claims on the land which he had earlier given to John *de la Forde* and Alan Long. For this the abbess granted him 7 marks, to relieve his *magnam neccessitatem* (**382**).

It was only through a careful sifting of the charters that it became clear that so many of the Bullington documents originated from Thomas of Bullington and his immediate family. He might have been incorrigibly inefficient to have found himself in such difficulties, or the need to provide honourably for two daughters might have been too much Not only had Thomas's early debts put a burden on the

family, but the daughters and their husbands appear to have had difficulty in making up the ground as the century progressed. It also seems that his three sons-in-law, Alan Long, John *de la Forde* and John Iuvenis, either failed to produce heirs, or failed to maintain their position in the rural society. This is what can be deduced from the fact that their widows appeared to have been forced to sell off their inheritance to meet the trials of their old age. Whatever the true cause of the difficulties, the net result of all this was that the Abbess of Wherwell was able to gain control of lands that had probably been held in hereditary right by Thomas's family for generations. Private misfortune presented the abbey with opportunity to gain, particularly in Bullington.

There is interesting information in the cartulary regarding the fortunes of the family of Thomas son of Ralph, who granted 1 acre to the abbey in 1230-40 (**36,37**). Ralph was the *pater familias,* having two sons, Thomas and John, and they seem to have originated in Inkpen, as **37** says that Ralph was *de Ingepenne.*[144] The acre that he gave to the abbey was to support the lighting in the conventual church, and this marks out Ralph *de Ingepenne* as a particular supporter of Wherwell Abbey during Euphemia's time. The abbey was also to gain from a gift Ralph's son, John, who donated a messuage with appurtenances in Wherwell to the abbey in perpetuity, probably during the 1250s, and a further dwelling house with curtilages in the same vill a bit later (**16,17**). He finally surrendered 10 acres of arable and a rent of 5s to the abbey in 1269 (**18,19**), and on account of this he was favoured by a corrody equal to that of one chaplain, for himself and his wife till the end of their lives.

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144 See the Ingepenne/Wayte family tree. Part II, Fig. 18.

The abbey also acquired land through John's nephew, John, son of his brother, Thomas; but here the indications are that impoverishment and financial difficulties were behind these gifts. John son of Thomas quitclaimed to the abbey his rights on his lands in *Wydedell* in Wherwell for 12 marks *ad magnam neccessitatem meam relevandam* (**15**). A further sale of 2 messuages with curtilages in Wherwell to the value of 11 marks followed (**20**), and around the same date, all rights that he held on his lands in Wherwell for 4 marks, again to relieve his great need.

There is a possibility that the crises suffered by John son of Thomas and some of the Bullington families arose because of the atrociously wet weather conditions in 1258, which led to crop failure and widespread famine.[145] Whatever the reasons for the hardship, the loss suffered by these unfortunate men was the Abbey's gain, and there were consolations; the donor was also able to benefit from comfort and support in hard times. It is poignant that such misfortune apparently befell the family from Inkpen, who were so closely associated with Wherwell for several generations.[146]

4.6. Charity

The Wherwell cartulary is witness to the inter-relationship of the freemen of Wherwell hundred, but there is little to indicate in what regard the common people held the abbey itself. As tenants their prosperity was intertwined. Whereas conceivably, if the cartulary records are to be believed, local people took advantage in the slump which followed the fire of 1141, they could also suffer when the abbey was in difficulties. It was noted above, that in the 1340s the abbey suffered injury on

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145 Matthew Paris, *Chron.Maj. V*, 690-4, 711, 724, 728.

account of the destructive behaviour of passing troops (**55**), but did the local people treat the abbey with respect ? The bishops' registers suggest that there was considerable anti-clericalism and disorder in Hampshire during the fourteenth century. This was evident during the episcopates of Rigaud de Asserio (1320-1323), John Stratford (1323-1333), and Adam Orleton (1333-1345). Asserio had to set up into a commission to initiate the reconsecration of the burial ground of the nuns of Wherwell which had been polluted by the shedding of blood probably the result of the assault on the parish priest of Wherwell which was recorded in Orleton's register.[147] During John Stratford's time there were further widespread incidents.[148]

Any disrespect or unpopularity that the abbey might have suffered could have been mitigated by its deeds of charity. It was usually the custumal of a religious house which recorded the regular giving of doles, and such like, which would have demonstrated the nuns' care for the poor. Unfortunately, no custumal survives from Wherwell. What has survived in the cartulary are the bequests of several abbesses, starting with Euphemia. She bequeathed 4 marks *per annum* for the care of sick sisters in the infirmary (**63**), and 1 mark to the convent itself. This demonstrates that her first priority was to improve the comforts of the sisters in her own nunnery, rather than the poor of the neighbourhood. However, on her deathbed, Abbess Euphemia granted 13s. rent from the property she bought from Henry *le Frie* to the poor. 8s. for bread, and 5s. for distribution at the discretion of the steward (**413**).

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146 See Chapter 4.3. below

147 Haines (1978), 65-8.

148 Reference to the disorder of these years can be found in *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae II*, ed. D. Wilkins (London, 1737), 702-9; Haines (1972), 4.

In a similar vein there is a grant by Abbess Constance (1259-1262) of 31s. 6d. from land bought from John of St. Valery in the *vill* of Forton. This was to go towards a pittance for the convent, valued at 1 mark. Of the remainder, she instructed that half a mark should be spent on bread for the poor, and an additional 4s. on a grant for lay-people and the poor, to be distributed at Christmas (**65**). For masses for her own soul, she left 20d, and for the chaplain of the infirmary, 12d. The residue of 4s. 10d. was to be distributed at the discretion of the abbess.

These grants are not continued beyond the time of Abbess Constance suggesting that the tradition set by Abbess Euphemia did not survive long, though it is possible that the allowances continued according to the wishes of all three abbesses, after all the request was that they should be paid out on the anniversary of their deaths, they were taken very seriously, and the threat of excommunication was invoked for failure to implement the grants.

It is possible that the Euphemia's grants reflected the climatic conditions which were especially harsh in the years 1257-1262. Matthew Paris described how, in 1258, the catastrophic weather created such scarcity that ' very large number of poor people died, and dead bodies were found in all directions, swollen and livid, lying by fives and sixes in pigsties, on dunghills and in the muddy streets.' He went on to claim that famine and pestilence stalked the land to such an extent that many thousands died of hunger.[149] He also makes particular reference to the hardship suffered by people in the Salisbury area following violent flooding on the eve of St. John the Baptist, swelling the rivers and overwhelming the meadow lands and

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149 *Chron.Maj. V*, 690, 693-4, 711, 724, 728.

destroying crops. However, the grants may just reflect the piety of Euphemia and her successors.

The Wherwell documents quoted above all represent acts of charity by individual abbesses. But one of the most generous donors to the abbey was Ralph Falconer, steward of Wherwell. In March 1258 he made a grant of rents, etc. from lands in East Aston and Wyke, which he had bought and held of Henry *le Frie* (**204**). 64 probably concerns the same grant. This bears a puzzling resemblance to the grant by Euphemia cited above, and indeed **204** is not the only document spelling out Ralph's generosity. **202** is a grant by Abbess 'M' confirming the grant by Ralph Falconer, sometime steward of Wherwell, of a 20s. annual allowance to the nuns and priests, a quarter of which must be distributed to the poor 'according to the custom of the house.' Also a 12s. grant to the priest who ministers in the infirmary chapel. As this money is to be raised from land which he held of Henry *le Frie*, it seems the grants were from this common source.[150]

Another signifiant grant was that given by Philip of Faukonberg. According to **452** he left 10s. as a pittance for the convent and 13s. for the relief of the poor on the anniversary of his death. The figures are wrong because he only allowed 13s. to buy rents in Winchester for this purpose. Philip's death occurred around 1228 and his *obit* is commemorated in the Wherwell calendar in December. The impression to be gained from this calendar is that Philip de Faukonberg was a man who greatly influenced Euphemia, and there was some close association with his mother, who is also remembered in the *obit* list. There was clearly a spirit of generosity around

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150 See too **204.**

during Euphemia's time and this no doubt coloured the attitude of her immediate successors.

As far as we know, the tradition was barely maintained in the fourteenth century, though one important new grant was made for the benefit of the poor. 10s. was to be paid for buying wheat for the bread on the anniversary of the death of Henry le Wayte (**130**). This was a reinforcement of the gift dated 1323, made by *magister* Henry le Wayte (**92**). Henry's was the only fourteenth-century grant made for the benefit of the poor in the cartulary. Perhaps the impulse to charitable works faded with Euphemia's memory, and this, combined with increasing financial difficulties within the convent itself, apparently brought a check on the convent's generosity. **55** spells out very clearly how pinched the nuns felt themselves to be by the 1340s; they talked of the 'excessive number of sisters who demanded life-long sustenance from the monastery.' The lack of resources was so severe that the sisters were forced to take time away by visiting relatives to reduce the day-to-day living expenses. In order to raise funds, the nuns felt obliged to take in lodgers and do menial tasks either in the fields or in the cloth industry, all of which they considered to be a scandal. Although these claims might have been exaggerated, it does seem that the best days of Wherwell Abbey had been in the thirteenth century and the whole community, including the poor, had benefited at this time.

The well-to-do still had an impulse to genuine charity, though. The will of Alan of Sutton mentioned above, contains several references to the poor **219**: they were to be given a distribution at his funeral, and his executors were given discretion to make a further distribution from the residue of his estate as they sought fit, *pro*

anima mea melius videbit expedire. Wherwell Abbey was not a beneficiary. Instead he left money to the Brothers Minor, the Carmelite Brothers and the Augustinian Brothers, all of Winchester, and to the leper hospitals in Alton and Andover. The rest were personal legacies.

It is clear that the Abbey itself was not deemed to be a charitable institution and it is not obvious that it drew much financial support from the better off landholders of the district. The cartulary does not even give clear evidence that the Indulgences granted to all those who gave generously to the abbey were effective in their purpose of raising funds.[151] **S25** spells out the portions belonging to the church which were the result of gifts. The donation of 4lbs. of wax by William of Longstock stand out as being exceptional. One might even surmise that the rarity of such gifts suggests a luke warm attitude on behalf of the neighbours towards the Abbey and a less than anxious attitude to their own salvation.

4.7. Wider connections

The Bullington, Wayte, Forester and Sutton families all shared the distinction of having all their land in the vills around Wherwell; however, Wherwell Abbey drew support from further afield on a few rare occasions. Three charters relating to the Beauchamp family are examples of this (**22,23**). The Beauchamps were one of the most prominent families in the land, and these documents seem to refer to the branch of the family that intermarried with the Mortimer and the Mauduit families: Beauchamp of Elmley.[152] The Wherwell documents were designed to benefit Isabel

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[151] 35, S8-**10,S31**. An example of a gift which might have been made in response to one of the the Indulgences was Mary Forester's gift. **11** There are very few others.

[152] *The Beauchamp Cartulary,* ed. E. Mason (PRS, New Series, 43), lviii.

de Kanefegh, and two of her daughters, named Lorencia and Agnes, while they lived, and then Wherwell Abbey.

Isabel de *Kanefegh* was probably identical with the Isabel Mortimer, who is referred to in **23**. *Kanefegh* was a way of spelling Candover, and of the six manors in Preston Candover, in north Hampshire, one was held by the Mortimer family.[153] Isabel was the name of the wife of Roger de Mortimer of Wigmore, d.1214, and the dating and her circumstances suggest she was the Isabel in question, perhaps living at Candover for at least some of the 38 years of her widowhood. She died in 1252.

The scheme was set up in 1236. Abbess Euphemia granted Isabel *Kanafegh* rents of 30s. *per annum* from the mill of Quittbridge on the Isle of Wight, for which Isabel gave Euphemia 24 marks, cash down (**22**). Isabel's special postscript, added at the end of **22,** suggest that Lorencia and Agnes became nuns at Wherwell, finally dying under the care of sisters at the infirmary, who were the ultimate beneficiaries of the arrangement. Indeed the family had other links to Wherwell. **23** implies that there was a second scheme in place concerning the mill on the Isle of Wight, whereby 20s assigned annually to Isabel Mortimer's grandaughter (*nepta*), Isabel Beauchamp should also be distributed to the infirmary. This Isabel was probably Isabel Mauduit, d. *ante* 1268, who had married William Beauchamp III, son of Isabel Mortimer's daughter Joan d.1225 and Walter Beauchamp II d.1236. Thus she was really Isabel Mortimer's grandaughter-in-law, rather than grandaughter by birth. The intertwining of the Mauduit and Mortimer families is made the more likely by the fact that the Mauduits also held one of the manors in Preston Candover, as well as a manor called

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153 *VCH Hants III*, 372.

Kanafegh in Hartley Mauduit, in Alton hundred. The family had held these since the conquest.[154]

Another well known family which is represented in the cartulary is the family of St. Valery, whose main interests were in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.[155] We know they were active landholders in the Wherwell area, as around 1260, *dominus* John *de Valerico, miles* witnessed two charters at Wherwell (**397,401**), and the family had the mill at Bullington in the middle of the thirteenth century (213). Sometime in the 1250s John bought land in Forton from Walter Erkebande together with the office of kitchener (**26,27**). Within a year, John of St. Valery had sold on these purchases to the abbey for 70 marks (**25,28**). This is the land from which Abbess Constance chose to draw the income from for the charitable works to be performed on the anniversary of her death (**65**). There are other St. Valery documents in the cartulary which belong to the fourteenth century and concern Agnes, widow of Sir Richard of St. Valery.[156] They confirm that a branch of the family had interests in Bullington.

Some of the earliest documents in the cartulary concern land in Upton (**145-149**). The witness list of **146** suggests they may even belong to the late twelfth century. This is on account of the presence of three members of the *de Port* family, Adam, William and Robert. They were descendents of the powerful Hugh *de Port* who had been awarded fifty-six manors by the Conqueror, mostly in Hampshire.[157] Adam de Port is marked out as an overlord, and his kinship with Agnes de Arundel is

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154 *ibid* and *VCH Hants II*, 508-10.

155 *VCH Berks II*, 130, *IV*, 464, 473, 526: *VCH Oxfordshire XII*, 21, 219, 231, 305, 313. The lands of the Honour of St. Valery were siezed by Henry III. See too *Parl. Writs I, Part II*, 2, 312, 824.

156 The other St. Valery documents in the cartulary belong to the 14th.c. and concern Agnes, widow of Sir Richard of St. Valery : 144,161,220,222,223,224,227.

157 The village of Amport, 4 miles west of Andover, derives its name from that family.

referred to. Other members of the Arundel family are named, in particular, Hugh de Arundel, who was the overlord of the donor of the property in question. A full panoply of Arundels witnessed the documents, two Williams, John, and Richard.

Searching for other families whose interests extended beyond Wherwell itself, and who might be considered to be gentry status, one finds *de Sancto Vittore*, Geoffrey, James, John and William;[158] John Russell and Walter Russell, both of whom receive parliamentary writs, John for Overton in 1305 and Walter for 1296/7;[159] Hugh Escote, just one entry (385);[160] John and Hugo *de Bokelonde*;[161] Geoffrey and John *de la Ryde*; Henry Brewer,[162] and John Herrying. Those bearing the status of *miles* include Thomas Coudray, and Geoffrey, of the same family.[163] One of their descendents, Avelina, became abbess of Wherwell in 1518. Thomas Coudray had married Agnes de Sacey, co heiress of Emery de Sacey of Barton Stacey. Agnes's sister Isabel married Warrin de Brassingbourne. Another notable local man was Sir Herbert of Calne from Drayton who was enfoeffed by the Brayboefs.[164] **229** Hugh *de Brayboef*, like Edmund of Sutton was styled *miles*. The Brayboef and Sutton families have already been discussed. Hugh was part of the family that were twelfth century patrons of Wherwell abbey.[165]

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158 **16,19,26-7,86,**87,**89-**91,221,226,**325,379,395.**

159 **12,22,37,38,**45,**125,164,**169,**193,**230,239,241,**254,259,381,383,388,389,419,S20,S29.**
Parl. Writs I,Part II, 85, 175, 290.

160 *ibid* 85, 128.

161 **84,85,97,198.** The family perhaps centred in Ringwood Hundred, *Nom.Vill.*, 40.

162 **46,333,337,**338,339.

163 337,**344.** Thomas held *Shireburn Coudray* in Basingstoke Hundred, *Nom.Vill.* 32. The Coudrays also held land in Barton Stacey, *CFA 1284-1431*, 326. *Nom.Vill.* 27; *Parl. Writs I, Part II,* 341.

164 Sometimes spelt Caune or Canne. Herbert features in 239 and **419**. Of his relatives, Baldwin in particular was a frequent witess: **13,24,27,45,204,382,**391,393. Also Robert, **271.** Herbert held a knight's fee in Drayton, Barton Stacey, *Book of Fees II*, 700. See too *VCH Hants IV*, 420.

165 See Chapter 2.2. above. *Parl. Writs I, Part II,* 312.

On the whole the evidence in the cartulary seems to be that after Abbess Matilda's initial efforts at getting new patrons at the end of the twelfth century, few families of very high status supported the abbey in a material way, though they did occasionally come to Wherwell if their kinsmen were involved with a land transfer.

A county notable who appears in the cartulary to support a transaction involving a man of high status, was Hugh Chickenhull, tenant-in-chief of the king, whose grand-daughter married Henry le Wayte, as has already been noted. He witnessed one Wherwell charter (**343**). This was a grant by William *de Lisle* (*de Insula Bona*) to Ricard of Sutton, and this document was sufficiently important to attract the presence of John *de Lisle*, then sheriff of Hampshire. It demonstrates the affinity enjoyed by the most prominent members of the county and the infrequency of their presence in the Wherwell cartulary.

The Lisle family are represented only briefly, since William *de Lisle* held lands in Bullington in the fourteenth century which eventually came to the abbey.[166] **343** contains a grant of rents in East Bullington to Richard of Sutton. A few years previously William had granted rents worth 41s. 11d. to Roger and Annora Forester, also in East Bullington (**126-8**). The Foresters had to pay William £100 for this grant which was to be for a 22 year term (**132**). However in 1339 the property passed on to the abbey due to the deal between Roger Forester and Henry le Wayte, which nevertheless left Roger's heir John, with a permanent obligation to pass on to the abbey the annual rent of 20s. (**S17**). In 1339 Abbess Matilda de Littleton

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[166] The Lisle family derived their name from the Isle of Wight, and **193** concerns a gift by Abbess Euphemia to the rector of Newchurch which is witnessed by Geoffrey and Walter *de Insula*. However, William *de Lisle* also held Bransbury near Barton Stacey: *Nom.Vill.* 19.

declared that this rent should be paid to the sacrist for the use of the conventual church (**S18**).

But basically Wherwell attracted little attention from the big county families. Even the Warden of Chute Forest gave Wherwell a wide berth, although Matthew *de Columbers* [II] was a witness, just once, to a Wherwell document (**24**). The position of Warden was passed to John *de Lisle* in 1281 by virtue of his marriage to Matthew's niece, Nicola.[167]

A far more typical family which features in the cartulary is the Cormailles family. This was a knightly family with holdings in Andover Hundred. The family held the manor of Thruxton (*Trokeleston*), near Andover.[168] John *de Cormailles*, who witnessed two document in 1314 and 1317, is called a knight in both (**84,229**).[169] It was probably his father or grandfather, also called John, who had given service to the crown since the middle of the previous century as a collector of taxes.[170] In 1339 Richard *de Cormailles*, accompanied by John *de Ingepenne*, travelled to London to inform the king of the death of Abbess Matilda de Littleton and to seek a licence to elect a new abbess, thus the family was more involved with the abbey than is apparent from the documentation in the cartulary.[171]

Not suprisingly, charters relating to land in any of Wherwell's neighbouring vills attracted the local gentry as witnesses. In Barton Stacey and Bullington, for instance, the Ringbourne family is conspicuous. Thus there is Hugo, Robert,

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167 *VCH. Wilts IV*, 425-6 & 440.

168 *Nom.Vill.* 28.

169 John Cormailles, *miles* was patron of the church of Thruxton (*Thorkelestone*), Kimpton's neighbouring village. *Reg. Wood. II*, 712. *Parl. Writs I, Part II*, 531.

170 *CLR 1251-60*, 3, 25; *CLR 1267-72*, 208.

171 PRO C81/263/262. Part II, Fig. 16.

Thomas and, most frequently, John *Ryngeburne* in numerous documents.[172] William Ringbourne, sheriff of the county in 1381, does not, however feature.

Imary *de Sacey*, son of Roger *de Sacey*, was a witness to **89.** King John had granted Roger lands in Barton Stacey, indeed the village owed its very name to the family.[173]

The Sturmy family were also associated with the Barton Stacey area, for instance in 1332, Abbess Isabella was obliged to concede some tithes to Henry Sturmy (**S19**). Their interests extended to several areas of the county, including Elvethan in Odiham hundred.[174] On at least eight occasions Henry was witness to documents in the cartulary, and there is a surviving original charter in which he witnesses a transfer of land between the Waytes and the *Ingepennes* in Barton Stacey dated 1332.[175] In 1348 Henry oversaw an Inquisition relating to the raising of aids, and in 1356 he was issued with a commission to act as a Justice in Eyre for the Forest of Chute.[176]

Huse, sometimes spelt Husse or Hussey, was also a name associated with the area, and there are charters witnessed by *dominus* Roger, *miles* and John Huse. John was Roger's brother, and heir.[177] Their local interests were in Barton Stacey, Forton and Middleton. Roger had acquired the mill at Forton by the fourteenth century, for

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172 **88,90,98,110,**119,**126,**215,218,384,391,392,412.

173 *CChR 1231*, 133. *Book of Fees II*, 703.

174 *Nom.Vill.* 35. *CFA 1284-1431*, 326.

175 **135,**335,337,338,339,**344,**346,450 HRO 57M76/E/T7

176 *CFA 1284-1431*, 323 and *CPR 1354-8*, 432. The latter writ was in fact revoked.

177 **344,**333,337,**301** *CIPM XI*, 67 shows that Roger held land in other counties, as well as Hampshire. *CIPM XIII*, 25-6, records John's death in 1376.

instance and he held half a knight's fee in Barton Stacey.[178] Knightly families of this status had interests spanning several hundreds and took their share of responsibilites. In 1300 Henry Husse was liable to king's service on account of having in excess of £40 worth of land in Hampshire.[179]

The Huse land in Kimpton passed into the hands of John *de Wymbledon*, who held the manor in 1322 together with William Spirecok.[180] John witnessed two charters at Wherwell,[181] and although William Spirecok did not feature, several other members of this well known local family did, notably Adam, John, and Thomas.[182] The Spirecoks had substantial trading interests in Andover, and held the manor of Upper Clatford.[183] Thus they were drawn into responsibilities both locally and for the king.[184] Matilda Spirecok became a nun at Wherwell in 1324.[185]

Another family with strong trading interests in Andover were the Ponyngtons.[186] There is a document in the cartulary dated around 1300 in which Abbess Isabella makes a concession to John Ponyngton of payment of rent *quia predictus Johannes gubernator [est] tam in secta curia quam in anime*, it is not quite clear what responsibilities this refers to (**110**). There are at least seventeen

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178 *CFA 1284-1431*, 326. *CIPM XI*, 67; *XIII*, 25-6. The family also had interests in Kimpton (*Cumeton*). *ibid* 325 and *Nom.Vill.* 27-8. See also *Reg. Pont, Reg. Edington* and *Reg.Sand.*, and HRO 57M76M E/T9 for the Barton Stacey connection.

179 *Parl. Writs I, Part 2*, 678.

180 *Reg.Sand.*, 509. Isabel Husee's executors were involved in a dispute with John of Wimbledon concerning *duas tallias quas Johannes de Wymbledon filius Johannis de Wymbledon contulit in curia regis.* PRO KB 27/185 *rot.* 35.v. See also PRO KB27/179.

181 **135**,450

182 84,98,**108-10,122,154-5,198**,227,289,290,**341.** *Parl. Writs. I, Part II,* 128, 341.

183 *Nom.Vill,* 27-8. See too the Andover In & Out Hundred Court Rolls, HRO 37M85 2/HC/4 etc.

184 See especially Adam's role in the Inkpen tithes dispute in **108** and **109** and PRO E32/169 where John is cited as a regarder of the forest. For the family's merchant status, see Gross, *II* (1927), 290, 293, 316 etc. See too *Parl. Writs I,* 128. This is for 1302,

185 Coldicott (1989), 43.

186 Gross *II* (1927), 298, 305, 309, 311 etc.

documents in the cartulary witnessed by John Ponyngton, and two by John son of John.[187] This younger John was a Regarder of the Forest in 1330.[188]

In summary, then, the Wherwell cartulary demonstrates the presence of a wide number of prominent local people, with interests in both town and country.

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187 **19,77,97,123,198,200-1,**214**,257,**289**,357,**359**,360,361,380,S14,S28.**

188 PRO E 32/169.

CHAPTER 5 DEFENDING THE ABBEY'S INTERESTS

5.1. Conflicts over tithes

As the thirteenth century progressed, problems arose between the monasteries and their priests over the division of tithes. Wherwell was as involved as many other religious houses. The hearing of disputes was authorised by the bishop, and the judgements confirmed. Hearings were presided over by judges delegate at various venues, not always specified, as for instance the hearing of 1201 concerning the tithes of Newchurch (**192**). Other cases were heard at Bristol (**S5**), Chichester (**162**), Salisbury (**66**), the Court of the Arches, in London (**49,108-9,206,271-80**), and St. Paul's London (**352**),[1] involving a great deal of time and expense, but these cases were not always brought at the request of the abbey. The bishop had a genuine role as arbitor and he was also required to be meticulous, for instance in 1334 a dispute could only be settled if an argument was resolved over whether an original identure had been tampered with by erasures and scribbled additions. The document was meticulously inspected (**S12**). The desire to see fair play and to make agreements binding provided a huge boost to episcopal involvement in the affairs of Wherwell. Battles over tithes between the abbess and various rectors, are evident in three well documented cases: at the tithing of Drayton in Barton Stacey, at Inkpen and at Wallop.

Wherwell abbey's entitlement to the tithes of the hamlet of Drayton in Barton Stacey arose from a grant made by Anktil *de Brayboef* of the tithes of his demesne (**190**) sometime in the last quarter of the twelfth century. These were confirmed by Godfrey de

Lucy in 1197 and 1201, (**212,190**) and by Gregory IX and Alexander IV (**3,4,7**). In 1232 the rector of Barton Stacey disputed the abbey's rights and an enquiry was heard before the Prior of St. Augustine's Bristol. The documents regarding this hearing are **S5** and **S6.** **S1** and **195** are confirmations by the Prior of St. Swithun's of the original grant, which being dated 1232, presumably represent his evidence in favour of the abbey. **S5** ruled that the rector was entitled to the lesser tithes (of hay), but the abbey was to retain the tithes from the demesne lands, now in the hands of Herbert of Calne, the resident tenant of the *Brayboef* family.[2] All seemed to proceed without problems until March 1267 when the current rector of Barton Stacey, William de Saham, put in a claim at the Court of the Arches that the abbess was injuring his rights to the tithes.

William de Saham was a formidable adversary for the abbey to contend with. He started his career in the household of Hugh Despenser who held land of the king in Barton Stacey,[3] and went on to become a king's clerk, and royal justice, sitting on numerous commissions for the king, including the *Quo Warranto* proceedings.[4] The dispute with the abbey was lengthy, and many of the documents are in the cartulary, albeit muddled up. Following the case from the beginning, the dating order is as follows: 272,280,**279,273,**270,**49,276,**266,268,**271,**269,**274,275,278** and 267. **273** is Ottobuono's mandate to the Dean of the Arches to hear the case. The problem for the Dean and the contending parties, was the reluctance of the witnesses to come to London

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[1] This was just one case involving the tithes of Hannington, Wilts in 1304. The dispute is not included in the analysis of the Wherwell tithe disputes, below.

[2] *VCH Hants IV,* 420. This gives references to the holders of the manor of Barton Stacey and explains the Brayboef, Calne connection. He witnessed several charters at Wherwell in the 1240s-50s, **(37,38,89,91,193,221,388)**

[3] *CPR 1266-72,* 265. *CFA 1284-1431,* 311. The *CPR* includes numerous commissions granted to William de Saham by the king. William's association with Barton Stacey is confirmed by a record of a grant by Robert *de Hibernia* of a messuage and virgate in Barton valued at £20. *CCR 1279-1288,* 240.

[4] See numerous entries in the *CPR 1272-1281.* Cam (1930), 51 .

to give evidence (**49**) in spite of threats of excommunication for non-cooperation delivered by the Dean of Andover. Their excuse was that they were old and feeble. A decision was made to appoint someone from the local deanery to take statements from the witnesses in their own homes (**276**). This was a year after the commencement of the case, and it was apparently not accomplished because another order had to be issued in the following year (**271**). Peter *de Cunte*, the Dean of Andover, finally reported that he had obtained the evidence, but the details are not spelt out in the cartulary (**274**). Perhaps this is because the results were negative. It seems the witnesses refused to say anything, forcing the Dean of the Arches to write to the Bishop of Winchester requesting that the secular arm of the law be exercised to force these stubborn men to testify (**275**). Even this was not enough to resolve the issue as **278** demonstrates that the Bishop did not do as he was asked: *illud facere non curaverat.* An exasperated William de Saham questioned whether it was really necessary to get the witnesses' evidence, but the abbess's proctor insisted it was, effectively stalling the process once more. The cartulary does not report an outcome to the affair. Either the case was dropped or William de Saham won, or perhaps just died. Usually the abbey never failed to record judgements made in their favour, and excluded records of those which went against them

> The trouble and expense involved by both parties who had repeatedly to appoint proctors to represent them at hearings which produced no definitive outcome because of the failure of the witnesses to appear, shows what a complicated business it was getting judgement in such cases and how important the outcome was to all parties. The behaviour of the witnesses demonstrates one or all of the following: a lack of interest in the squabbles of the clergy; a bemused attitude to clerical entitlements; a fear of getting

involved or a lack of anxiety over ecclesiastical censure, even if it was couched in the threatening terms of excommunication made by public denunciation in all the churches of the deanery.

The Wherwell cartulary does not mention what we know from other sources, namely that a previous rector of Barton Stacey had also been defending his tithe entitlement in the courts, albeit that this dispute was with Hyde Abbey over tithes in *Nywentone* (Newton Stacey), Fullerton and Wherwell in 1246. It is no wonder, perhaps, that the parties got confused as land holdings and lordship was so closely interwoven and were disputed field by field, acre by acre.[5]

A shock for the abbess and convent came in 1302, 34 years after the William de Saham case had been initiated, when following a petition to the king's council, an inquisition declared that the Abbess of Wherwell had no right at all to the tithes of Drayton.[6] The inquisition ruled that the Drayton tithes came from tenements held by both the Abbot of Hyde and the Brayboef family, and that the greater tithes were to go to the Prior of Llanthony, Gloucester, the holder of the advowsen of Barton Stacey Church since 1136. The church was appropriated by Llanthony in 1308.[7] Details of this and of the ecclesiastical hearings which tried to settle the claims of the various parties can be found in the episcopal register.[8]

A fresh wave of interest in the Drayton tithes came thirty years later. In 1332 the Abbess of Wherwell actually granted the rector of Barton Stacey together with Henry

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5 *Winchester Cathedral Cartulary*, ed. A.W. Goodman (Winchester, 1927), 170.
6 *CI M I*, 519.
7 *VCH Hants IV*, 419-20. The advowsen had been granted to Llanthony by Miles of Gloucester.
8 *Reg. Woodlock* (1940), 354, 428, 452.

Sturmy *omnes decimas nostras in parochia de Bethon Sacey tam maiores quam minores* **(S19).** Had the findings of the Inquisition of 1302 been ignored ?

Two more relevant documents amongst the sacrist collection concern the Drayton tithes, first an *inspeximus* of deeds concerning the tithes from various demesne lands, including Barton Stacey, which yielded the abbey 33s. 4d. *per annum* (**S24**), and a second, dated 1349, which records the abbess's appointment of John Herring to collect the tithes (**S22**). The detailed memorandum spelling out field by field the various tithes due to the abbey is found in **S13** and probably represent John Herring's work. The document is certainly contemporary with him as he is mentioned as a landholder in the text. Not only does it detail all the fields, but it spells out the means that the tithes were allocated, showing that the rector, the vicar and the *ecclesia* of Wherwell, took it in turns to pick the best hides, lambs, piglets, cheese, apples etc. on a strict rota basis (**S13**) The documents regarding Barton Stacey show how fragile were the agreements over the tithe entitlements, how much they were valued and fought for, and how complex the allocation of them was.

The problems of the Inkpen tithes were just as complex as those of Barton Stacey. The cartulary contains a 1201 confirmation by Bishop Herbert Poore of Salisbury of two parts of the tithes of the demesne lands of Gervaise Paynel in Inkpen (**185**), and this is confirmed again by the Dean and Chapter in 1232 (**187**), and by Robert Bingham in 1233 (**186**). They also feature in the papal confirmations of 1228 and 1257 (**3,4**). According to **259**, Euphemia successfully appropriated the tithes to the abbey. The trouble arose in the following century when the current rector of Inkpen, John of Shipton came to blows with the abbess's men over the apportionment.

The account of the proceedings against John of Shipton in the Consistory Court of Salisbury represents the longest document in the cartulary (**66**). As well as detailing the various procedures involved in getting the case to court, every detail of the fields in Inkpen are spelt out, together with their ownership, location, and proceeds. According to the abbey's proctor, the nuns had always been entitled to the tithes, and suprisingly, bearing in mind his actions, John of Shipton admitted this was true. Details were agreed regarding this, and then witnesses were produced on behalf of the abbey who gave an account of John's aggressive behaviour: men from the household of the rector had descended upon Inkpen, and had fought with men of the household of the abbey causing bloodshed; this was public knowledge around Inkpen. John of Shipton did not deny this **(66,183).**

The correct order for the Inkpen documents regarding John of Shipton is **185,187,186,66, 183,** and **67.** One might think that the presumptuous behaviour of John of Shipton was caused by special circumstances, after all the documents say that the 1320 hearing was the culmination of two years of legal proceedings and the years 1315-18 were years of notorious hardship owing to unprecedently appalling weather conditions;[9] these factors were not mentioned by either side, however. It is interesting that John of Shipton's successor chose to pursue the claim for a larger share of the Inkpen tithes, in spite of the earlier ruling. In 1325 Clement of Wolverhampton was found guilty of obstructing the abbess's men in the manner of his predecessor, and this time he had the

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[9] *After the feast of Easter the dearth of corn was much increased. Such a scarcity has not been seen in our times in England, nor heard of for a hundred years ... during this time of scarcity a great famine appeared and after the famine... a severe pestilance of which many thousand died.* from *Vita Eduardi Secundi,* ed. N. Denholm-Young (1957), 70.

local squire, Thomas Randilou as an accomplice.[10] The Wherwell documents on Clement of Wolverhampton are **107,104,105,108** and **109.** Further details of Clement's appointment and his persistant stand against the abbess and her representative, the old steward, Henry le Wayte, father of the canon, can be found in the bishop's registers.[11] On the one hand Clement admitted all that was agreed at the John of Shipton hearing (**107**), on the other he is pursued a course of obstruction (**104**). Once more all parties were subjected to lengthy hearings at the Court of the Arches with all the usual problems of appointing proctors. Church authorities were brought out in force in the shape of the Deans of Andover, Newbury and Winchester, all costly and time consuming, but this time, apparently the dispute was finally laid to rest.

The potential for disagreement over the tithes of the demesne lands of Over Wallop was comparable to that of Inkpen and Drayton, in that the tithes were granted to the abbey in similar circumstances around the same time. This time the donor was Matthew *de Porteria* (**212,190,191,S1,S4).** These tithes were not included in Gregory IX's privilege of 1228 (**3**), but were in that of 1257 (**4**). Here too, a query arose between the rector and the abbess which was settled in 1235 (**S4**). According to the episcopal confirmation of the agreement, both the major and minor tithes were involved. At this enquiry, the abbess and convent agreed to let the rector take all the tithes for himself, but hereafter he was to pay ~~them~~ 30s. a year to the sacrist of the abbey as a pension (**S7**). In 1346 the current rector was called to task for failing to pay this annual pension. The full diocesan heirarchy rallied behind the Abbess to resolve the issue, in her favour (**S23**).

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10 Thomas was the second husband of the oft mentioned Emeline, widow of Roger *de Ingepenne*. *VCH Berkshire IV*, 202. The extent of their property is made apparent in **66**.

11 *Reg.Mart. I*, 248; *III*, 176, 179.

The same pension was still being paid by the rector of Wallop in 1539, its value unchanged in 270 years.[12]

A further document of interest in the cartulary concerns both the tithes of Over Wallop and Barton Stacey. In 1281, during the time of the vacancy caused by the death of Nicholas of Ely (1268-79), the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Pecham (1279-92) appointed Adam Hale as custodian of the spiritualities of the bishopric of Winchester. During this time he was authorised to make an official enquiry into the tithes of all the religious houses in the diocese, and **194** shows that the abbess was asked to arrange for the abbey's privileges, dispensations and muniments to be displayed.

5.2. *De insolencia clericorum romanorum*

The presumptions of the Roman clergy in the middle years of the thirteenth century, provoked Roger of Wendover to write of the *insolencia clericorum Romanorum.*[13] He claimed that they were taking the best benefices at the expense of native born men. The conflict is evident in the documents in the Wherwell cartulary.

The thirteenth-century church faced new problems. Principal amongst these was how to support the growing number of clerks groomed to look after, identify and defend the interests of the church as a whole and the papal office in particular. This reflected a parallel growth in the number of clerks serving litigation and bureaucracy in the secular sphere. Thus both the king, the bishops and the papal curia, shared a pressing problem: how to pay for their burgeoning new bureaucracies. All parties sought the same solution: clerks should be provided with benefices from which they could enjoy a comfortable income, and by delegating their pastoral duties to a vicar, they could pursue

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12 PRO SC6-Henry VIII-3342.

their administrative careers. But how could a benefice be secured ? Who traditionally had the right to appoint to benefices, which were in either episcopal or monastic hands, or rarely in the hands of private lords?

At Wherwell the abbess had had the advowson of the abbey's churches from time out of mind. However, under certain circumstances, especially in times of vacancies, the king was entitled to appoint someone of his choice. This regalian right was increasingly exercised in the fourteenth century (**112**), but less so in the thirteenth. During this era concessions were more likely to be made to episcopal candidates, sometimes as a courtesy, sometimes as an obligation. The serious problem of the thirteenth century was the increasing tendency of the papacy to make aggressive claims for candidates of their own choosing.

A classic interpretation of the evidence, favoured by early historians whose views were influenced by prejudices born during the reformation and bolstered by colourful passages from Matthew Paris and other chroniclers, goes something like this: successive popes, from Innocent III onwards, sought to satisfy the needs of their clerks and their own need for patronage, by over-riding the rights of traditional collators and putting in their own candidates. The papacy and the newly constituted college of cardinals became increasingly overbearing. As England was now a papal fief, the papacy had the excuse to keep a permanent presence in England, and traditional collators now had to confront the papacy through its agents in England such as Martin *de Camera*, *nuncio* of the pope's financial department. The accusation was that the behaviour of the agents was threatening. At first they merely requested benefices in distant lands for their own

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13 *Chronica Roger de Wendover III*, ed. Hewlett, RS 84 (1887), 16.

countrymen, but when these requests were resisted, they translated these requests into mandates. These mandates were in effect, demands for benefices, which if they were not met by the collators would result in their excommunication. This was the *insolencia clericorum Romanorum* so described by Roger of Wendover, which became the butt of numerous chroniclers of the thirteenth century and it seems, the reason for determined opposition by the Abbess of Wherwell. The story of papal provisions was, at best, 'a dismal one'.[14]

More recent interpretations are much kinder to the papacy:[15] it is thought that resistance to papal provisions was not widespread, and that earlier historians were far too quick to accept Matthew Paris's venomous comments about the papacy as being a reflection of the mood of the country as a whole; there was no deliberate policy on behalf of the papacy to put in alien clerks[16], rather it was demands from the clerks themselves that put pressure on a weak and irresolute papacy, and anyway, in many cases cathedrals and religious houses welcomed these Italian clerks on account of their skills and contacts. Helpless in the face of demand from this new articulate generation of clerks, the argument goes, successive popes responded to their requests by granting them papal provisions; at worst the papacy was negligent.

The granting of papal provisions caused particular difficulties because a provision was not a benefice, it was merely an expectation of a benefice, a paper provision only. It was a promise of a benefice which was not yet vacant. Apart from the obvious battles,

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14 F.W. Maitland, *Roman Canon Law in the Church of England* (London, 1898), 71.

15 A. Deeley, 'Papal Provision and Royal rights of Patronage in the early 14th.c.' *EHR* (1928); G. Barraclough, *Papal Provisions* (Oxford, 1935); Pantin (1955); Cheyette (1963); C.R. Cheney, *Pope Innocent III and England* (Stuttgart, 1976); K. Pennington, *Popes and Bishops: the Papal Monarchy in the 12th. & 13th.c.* (Pennsylvania, 1984).

16 Barraclough (1935), 98, 102 etc.

sometimes physical, sometimes legal, that ensued between expectant clerks all claiming provisions, this created a new financial burden on the collator, as the provisor expected an income during his period of expectancy.[17] The papacy admitted that the granting of expectancies and pensions to papal nominees was severely stretching many religious houses in England as institutions might be asked to take on more than one expectant clerk, creating a serious drain on the resources of an abbey. The situation became so commonplace that in 1255 Alexander IV (1254-1261) issued the constitution *Execrabilis*, in an effort to try to confine the number of reservations to four *per* chapter.[18] No evidence from Wherwell exists to show that they were having to pay for several expectant clerks, but clearly the extent of the problem was widely recognised.

Alexander IV's efforts appeared to have been insufficient to resolve the problem. By the fourteenth century the procedure of acquiring a provision was formalised by the papal curia; now, sponsorship and examination became essential steps towards the aquisition of a bull of provision, and anyone who sought a benefice regarded the securing of a papal provisions as essential. It was an extremely lucrative business for the papacy. Thus by the early part of the fourteenth century, most English clerks - even royal ones - sought and gained papal provisions, accordingly the numbers grew and grew.

It is not suprising, therefore, that the Wherwell material demonstrates a resistance to papal provisions growing in the thirteenth century, just when the country as a whole became consumed with anti-alien prejudice. The cartulary records two disputes over the

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[17] This could happen in cases where the advowsen was held by lay lords. Geoffrey de Mandeville, for instance, promised William de Myriden 40s. p.a. until he could provide him with a suitable benefice. See S.L. Waugh, 'Tenure to Contract: Lordship & Clientage,' in *EHR* (1986), 821.

[18] G. Barraclough, 'The Constitution *Execrabilis* of Alexander IV,' *EHR* (1934) 193-216.

appointment of foreign prelates between 1248 and 1264, and a serious battle at the end of the century is described in the register of the Bishop John Pontissara of Winchester.

The first case of outright resistance to a papal provision started in 1248. Whilst Euphemia was abbess, John Lettacorvus of Piacenza, canon of Tours, began an 8-year battle to win an unspecified benefice belonging to the abbey (**5,29**). He was seeking what was technically a 'general reservation;' if the claim had been for named benefice, it would have been a 'special reservation.' It is unlikely that the impetus for the request came from John himself, more likely it came from Ottobuono, who employed him both as a chaplain and as a sort of secret emissary.[19] However, the Wherwell documents state that his case was driven by Master Martin, clerk of the papal camera in England, who, 'on papal authority' wrote to the aged Abbess Euphemia claiming the reservation for the pope's candidate; he then 'forbade the Abbess and convent to take any action in these matters,' presumably, to appoint anyone themselves. Meanwhile it was Innocent IV who ordered the dean of Wells, and later master Alexander *de Ferentino* and Bernard *de Nympha* to present John Lettacorvus (**29**).

When the vacancy eventually arose, Euphemia, 'in mockery of the papal command' and in the face of all the pressure, conferred the benefice on someone of her own choosing, who is not named (**5, 29**). Following Euphemia's defiance, Innocent, again through the agency of Alexander and Bernard, commanded that a pension be assigned to John pending another vacancy to the value of at least 40 marks. The abbess persistently refused to make these payments. John's claim against the abbess in 1256

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19 *Original Papal Documents in England & Wales 1198-1304*, ed. J.E. Sayers (Oxford, 1999), 469.

was for 8 years of unpaid pension, amounting to 240 marks and an additional 100 marks for damages and expenses.

The case was heard at the papal palace at Anagni, by three arbitors, Simon Bishop elect of Aversa; William of St. Martin and Matthew *de Porta Salernitana*. The abbess was represented by William of Wyle, a canon of Salisbury. The case went in the abbey's favour. The arbitors told John to renounce all claims against the abbey, and they did not award him the 240 marks which he had been claiming in compensation for not having been given one of the abbey's benefices. However, there was a sting. Wherwell had to pay John the 100 marks he'd claimed in damages, demonstrating that the judgement was attempting to give some satisfaction to both parties.

This case demonstrates that the abbess was not willing to have either the pope, or his representatives in England, dictate who was to hold her benefices. Her resistance lasted eight years and she was apparently undaunted by the sentence of excommunication, which according to 29, accompanied her resistance. Unlike the Bishop of London who was similarly pressed by the papal camera to take a papal nominee (in this case the chaplain John *de Asti*), Euphemia did not give in to pressure, indeed she refused to pay John Lettacorvus the requested pension. She was determined to retain her own power of appointment, and everything points to her unwillingness to hand over one of her most valuable benefices, together with its revenues, to a foreigner at the bequest of the pope.

In spite of Euphemia's strong feelings about alien clergy, she failed to prevent Collingbourne Ducis falling into the hands of an Italian papal nominee. A document of 1262 makes clear that Thomas Pappazurri, chaplain of James, cardinal deacon of Sancta

Maria in Cosmedin, had won the living (**416**). He was the son of a Roman nobleman, Philip Papazzuri.[20] He had been rector of Collingbourne since at least 1254. The previous rector was Robert de Karevil, treasurer of Salisbury, who had had various benefices in the Salisbury diocese. It was because of Thomas's claim to a papal provision that Robert was forced to hand over Collingbourne.[21] This caused both anxiety and anger at Wherwell as the cartulary contains a document dated six months after Thomas Pappazurri's appointment, in which the special grant of 12 marks per annum (£8) payable from Collingbourne to the abbey as a pension is assured, on the grounds that 'Wherwell must be protected form the cunning of ill-wishers' (**261**).

Collingbourne was not one of the abbey's four principal churches, being situated outside Wherwell hundred, about 10 miles to the north-west, in the diocese of Salisbury. The advowson and tithes had been in their hands since at least the latter part of the twelfth century (**3,4,188,260,261,264**). The normal procedure for this type of benefice, was for the abbey to appoint a rector who would collect all the proceeds of the benefice and then pay an agreed 'pension' to the abbey.[22] This is what happened at Wallop. According to the 1281 valuation, a pension of £2 was payable by the Collingbourne rector to the abbess.

Proceedures for the claiming of money by and from absent clergy was evidently more complicated. According to **416**, Pappazzuri, who was of course absent, appointed his Italian agent, Francesco Rembertini, to receive 26 marks from the Abbess and convent of Wherwell, '*pro firma ecclesie sue de Collingbourne.*' The document suggests that

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20 *Reg. d'Inn.IV*, ed. E. Berger (1921), 3863: R. Brentano (1977), 296

21 *CPL I*, 298.

22 The regular system is described by J.E.Sayers, *Papal Judges Delegate in the Province of Canterbury 1198-1254* (Oxford, 1971), 195-9.

Pappazurri had agreed that the profits and proceeds of the church at Collingbourne belonged to the abbey, but as they had been farmed to him for a set sum, he was entitled to receive money directly from the abbey.

This system did not find favour with Wherwell, as documents dated 1270 and 1272, ten years after the arrangement with Pappazurri's agent, show that a different structure had been put in place. The abbey seems to have succeeded in getting Collingbourne in its own hands, because it was now in a position to grant the 'farm' of Collingbourne, not to a rector, but directly to a chaplain, albeit he had the rector's traditional responsibility of maintaining the chancel at his own expense. It is clear from the document that the chaplain was expected to officiate in the church himself, unlike the foreigner who preceded him . Under this agreement, he delivered a fixed farm rent of 39 rising to 40 marks, directly to the abbess (**250,414**). Wherwell had thus achieved a change at Collingbourne that allowed for a local man to take over what had been the preserve of an unwelcome, non-resident Italian. The care with which the agreements with the new chaplain were spelt out suggests that the hassle caused by the presence, or absence, of Thomas Pappazui at Collingbourne reinforced the determination of the Abbess and convent of Wherwell to try and keep control of their own benefices. This determination had already been demonstrated by the abbey's handling of the Lettacorvus case. But this was not the end of the story.

The messages coming out of the papal office in London were hardly conciliatory in the following years. The papal policy of trying to secure benefices to support its clerks was continued. In 1268, three years after his arrival in England as papal legate, Cardinal Ottobuono instructed James *de Pontu Siracusanus* and Roger Aretinus to write

to the Abbess and convent ordering them to accept his nominee, 'his beloved chaplain' Ardicio Tridano for any vacancy that might occur in any of their benefices. If the Abbess had put in someone of their own choosing, that person should be forcibly removed (**40**). A similar order was sent to the abbess and convent of St. Mary's, Winchester. This was probably a consequence of Ottobuono's 1265 general ruling prohibiting all prelates, chapters, convents to proceed with any election, provision or collation before all the legate's mandates had been obeyed. All vacancies at this time were to be reserved to the pope.[23] Ardicio was successfully rebuffed by Wherwell, but he must have been luckier elsewhere. He had an active career in England becoming a papal collector for the sextenniel tenth of 1274.[24] In the Calendar of Papal Letters he is described as dean of Milan and by 1282 was Bishop elect of Modena.

Ten years after Abbess Euphemia's death in 1257 and the battle over John Lettacorvus, the Abbess and convent of Wherwell continued to resist the appointment of unknown aliens to their prebends. The most detailed evidence for this is not contained in the Wherwell cartulary but in the register of Bishop John Pontissara of Winchester (1282-1304). It reports the battle that ensued between Wherwell and the papacy following the death of Berard of Naples in 1295. Berard of Naples had been holding Middleton for well over 24 years. He was a member of the powerful Caracciolo family. Originally chaplain to Innocent IV, he became Archdeacon of Outre-Vienne in the diocese of Tours; professor; judge; notary and administrator in both the civil and military fields; he was the holder of benefices as far apart as York, Bari and Paris, and closer to Wherwell, he

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23 Gibbs & Lang (1934), 73.

24 W.E. Lunt, 'A Papal Tenth levied in the British Isles from 1274-1280,' *EHR 32* (1917); *CPL I*, 455, 456, 466.

also held the position of prior of Andover.[25] The cartulary is silent on the matter of Berard's time as rector of Middleton, except that he sent an Italian called John Campore to collect the 32 marks which he claimed was due to him for the farm of the church at Middleton in 1271 (**51**). This echoes the system adopted at Collingbourne. Once more the absentee rector's Italian agents made twice yearly visits to Wherwell to collect cash to take back to Rome. The abbess did not like this.

When Berard died in 1295, the Abbess and convent promptly appointed and installed a local candidate, Philip of Barton, to Middleton. But the pope, Boniface VIII was determined to exercise his right to appoint a man of his choice, which he claimed had arisen because Berard had died in Rome during a papal vacancy. The Abbess and convent of Wherwell took a particular risk in fighting Bartholemew's appointment, for if Berard of Naples had died at Rome as the papal party claimed, then under the terms of the bull *Licet Ecclesiarum* of Clement IV, the pope had every right to appoint his successor.[26] But Wherwell based its claim to appoint Philip of Barton on the grounds that Berard of Naples had resigned in England before he left for Italy, nullifying the papal claim. Whatever the truth of the situation, the Abbess had to give in. She was ordered to remove Philip of Barton and make way for Bartholemew, son of Francis *de S. Angelo* of Rome. Bartholemew was chaplain to Peter *de Colonna*, cardinal deacon of S. Eustace.[27] The battle that ensued between Bartholemew and Peter and the Abbess was bitter and the Abbess appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury. At first Bishop Pontissara was sympathetic, but so much pressure was brought to bear on him from the

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25 *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Vol 19* ed. A.M. Ghisalberti (Rome, 1976), 314-5.

26 K.Pennington, *Popes and Bishops: the Papal Monarchy in the 12th. & 13th.c.*(Pennsylvannia, 1984), 120.

27 *Original papal documents* ed. J.E. Sayers (1999), 988.

pope via the Bishops of Durham and Ely that in the end he begged her to accept the papal nomination, and Bartholemew *de S. Angelo* sent 3 proctors, undoubtedly foreigners, to take possession of the rectory on his behalf.[28] The appearance of these aliens in the village roused the anger of the local people: a violent confrontation ensued at the church door at Middleton in the autumn of 1296 between 'a great multitude of armed men from the parish' and Bartholemew's band of alien supporters.[29] Meanwhile, Bishop Pontissara had braved a trip to Rome, a city at this time 'riven with conflict and menace' on account of the slurrs made by the Colonna family against the newly elected Boniface VIII,[30] and faced the combined pressure of the two Colonna family cardinals; they insisted Philip of Barton's institution had been irregular, and said that Philip should come to Rome in person to face them. The bishop, intimidated by their manner, wrote to Philip and the Abbess urging them to give in.

It should be noted that Bishop Pontissara had probably been an active party to the 'irregular' appointment of Philip of Barton, for Philip was one of his household. He was later to become Archdeacon of Surrey.[31] In May 1285 Abbess Elena of Wherwell wrote to Bishop Pontissara offering him a benefice for one of his clerks. This could have been a courtesy letter, as it was common practice for a bishop to be awarded the right to appoint by monasteries within his diocese on his accession to the see. However Bishop Pontissara had been in Winchester for three years when Abbess Elena wrote. Perhaps then it was not just a formality, but an anticipation of the death of Berard of Naples. The wording of her offer is interesting, for she favours one of the bishop's man 'being an

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28 *Reg. Pontissara I*, 817.
29 *ibid* 830.
30 R. Brentano, *Rome before Avignon* (California, 1990), 101.
31 *VCH Surrey II*, 59-60. He can be seen acting for the bishop in **246 251** for instance.

Englishman.'[32] Thus it seems that she expressly sought to prevent the appointment of another Italian to one of her benefice and had Pontissara's support in so doing.

This evidence, together with the earlier cases of John Lettacorvus and Thomas Pappazurri, demonstrates that the Abbess and convent of Wherwell made a determined effort to preserve their benefices for native born men and for native born men alone over a period of 50 years; it also supports the view of the story of thirteenth-century provisions found in Matthew Paris. One of the cases described by Matthew Paris almost precisely mirrors the John Lettacorvus case. This concerns the pope's mandate to the abbot of St. Albans ordering him to provide a benefice worth 40 marks to John of Camezan.[33] The menacing way in which this mandate is carried out by 'contemptible persons,' including the demand for money which the abbot gives in to, gives an idea what sort of pressure Wherwell was subjected to. Remember, Euphemia had refused to pay. One might almost believe Matthew Paris had inside information on Wherwell's dilemma with Robert Karville and Collingbourne when the following passage is considered:

> The treacherous master Martin clandestinely laid his greedy hands on the revenues of vacant churches, amongst others, the treasurership of the church of Salisbury, which he caused to be given to a nephew of the Pope.[34]

These passages also reflect conflict elsewhere: in 1248, the proctors of Goffredo *de Prefetti*, laid claim to the church of Long Itchington, only to find that Philip *de Asceles* had got their first; this resulted in violence between the two claimants.[35] We also know that the papacy had been trying to reserve prebends for Rome at least since the time of

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32 *Reg. Pont.I*, 315-6.
33 *Chron.Maj.V*, 405-6.
34 *ibid IV*, 285.
35 *Reg.d' Inn. IV*, 3742; *Letters & Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri*, ed. N. Vincent

Honorius III (1216-27). The Salisbury episcopal registers for 1225 record the pope's unwelcome demands for such a reservation, or rent in lieu of that reservation should one not be available. A year later, he demanded that two reservations should be kept for Rome. These demands met with strong resistance.[36]

There is little evidence in all this for the signs of cooperation which Barraclough spoke of between Rome and the English collators,[37] nor can we find evidence that the abbey welcomed and used Italian holders of their benefices to further their cause in Rome - a much argued point. With regard to Ottobuono, although he clearly played an important part in the pacification of England at the highest level, his patience and sagacity celebrated by Powicke was not evident in Wherwell;[38] rather Ottobuono's continuation of the policy of demanding benefices for papal nominees on pain of excommunication stored up trouble for the future.

There can be no doubt, too, that the attitude of Boniface VIII (1294-1303) over Middleton soured relations with at least one abbess. When Abbess Isabella de Wyntreshull (1298-1333) took over, she perused the abbey's accounts, and judged that her predecessors had carelessly granted away lands, probably at extremely uneconomic rents, with the blessing of the pope.[39] Yet it was six years before she ventured to get permission from the pope to reverse these long standing haemorrages of the abbey's goods. She did not trust Boniface VIII, and was waiting for him to die. We know this because within days of Benedict XI being elected as his successor in October 1303, she initiated her appeal. This meant sending her representatives on an arduous journey

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(C & Y, 1996), 42.

36 *Reg.Osmund, I*, 368; *II*, 53

37 Barraclough (1935), 142.

38 F.M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward*, Vol.2. (Oxford, 1947), 527-8.

across Europe in the depth of winter. They arrived in Rome in January 1304. Isabella clearly hoped that a new chapter in the abbey's relationship with Rome could be opened with the accession of a new pope.

Wherwell's complaints show that a deep distrust of the papacy had grown up as a result the Rome's appointment of alien clerks to the abbey's benefices. Their influence was felt locally, too, for they brought administrators in their train. Like other institutions, Wherwell suffered the indignity of having an absentee foreigner or his proctor nosing into their affairs. The proctors of the first half of the thirteenth century were accused of being spies, reporting back to the papal office in London on possible future vacancies and betraying the nation's secrets, as is evident in the Petitions to Parliament of 1304.[40]

One of the justifications for the increase of papal provisions was that local cathedral and provincial chapters were guilty of nepotism themselves, and had a snobbish prejudice against a class of newly educated clerks who did not come from the ranks of the local nobility. To this end the pope wrote to the bishop of Salisbury complaining that religious houses were 'closing the doors of promotion against poor and proficient clerks.'[41] It might well be true that the abbey's efforts to keep out aliens arose from its bonds with the local educated community whose sons sought an income, an outlet for their skills and an assured social status in either royal or episcopal service or through acquiring a benefice at Wherwell. Yet the situation was clearly difficult for the papacy, who needed to find incomes for the educated young men whose help it needed to run the

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39 This issue is discussed in Chapter 3.9 above

40 Powicke (1947), Vol., I, 277: H. MacKenzie, 'The Anti-Foreign Movement in England 1231-32,' *Haskins Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* ed. C.H. Taylor (New York, 1929), 192.

41 *CPL I*, 375; Barraclough (1935), 39.

increasingly complex papal machine; these men, they believed, served the whole of christendom and not just local interests.

Were provincial cliques dominating places like Wherwell ? The one example of a local dynasty entrenching itself at Wherwell was the Wayte family, from whose ranks came two of the abbey's stewards and two of its canons. Their landed interests were modest and they were really a sort of professional family, with links to the wealthy merchants of Andover and Winchester as is noted in Chapter 4.3; they were neither ignorant nor neglectful of their duties, in fact they were conspicuously diligent, but they were, undoubtedly part of a provincial elite.

These problems were new. The background of many of the canons of the early thirteenth century shows that Wherwell had been open to churchmen of national standing, many of whom were aliens. Indeed Abbess Euphemia was of alien origin herself, as was her aunt, Abbess Matilda. From Matilda's time, two notable churchmen associated with the alien household of Peter des Roches the Bishop of Winchester, were canons of Wherwell abbey: Philip de Faukonberg and Robert de Clinchamps, the latter from the Calvados region of Normandy. It has already been noted that Philip's association with Wherwell was strong,[42] meanwhile Robert de Clinchamps took a large responsibility for the finances of the diocese during Peter des Roches's most troubled years.[43] Wherwell had not therefore shut its door to either aliens or to educated clerks serving the needs of the episcopacy, rather the contrary. Under both Matilda and Euphemia, officials of Peter des Roches came and went at Wherwell. One prominent alien of Euphemia's time, Aubrey de Vitriaco, who was a canon of Wherwell was the

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42 Chapter 2.6 above.

chief official of Hugh des Roches and chaplain of Hugo Cardinal deacon of S. Sabina.[44] His frequent presence at Wherwell is known because he was often witness to charters, and he put up a claim to have a supply of firewood during his time of residency (**39**). The Abbess of Wherwell's later objections to alien clerks might not have been so much because of their nationality but because of their absenteeism and the manner of their appointment, an offence not committed by Peter des Roches's men who were at least active in the abbey's affairs.

The case for anti-alien prejudice at the beginning of the thirteenth century cannot be sustained at Wherwell even though Peter des Roches was an alien himself, from Touraine, and Vincent describes his household as being 'a haven for aliens increasingly at sea in an ever more hostile England.'[45] There is no evidence of hostility to the bishop or members of his household at Wherwell, rather close cooperation. We do not know what stand the abbey took during the rebellion of 1217, though judging by the entries in the *Kalendarium,* they followed events closely; nor do we know whether Peter des Roche's actions in Wessex in the aftermath of that rebellion were resented. Wherwell was not targeted by the papal legate Gaula, during these years when he sought to collate the benefices of rebel clerks on behalf of the pope.[46] Probably Wherwell could not afford to antagonise king John or his most famous bishop, for its magnificent abbey and fine new buildings were only just complete; to defy the bishop and the king would have been unthinkable at this time.

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43 N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches* (Cambridge, 1996), 130.
44 *CPL I*, 265.
45 Vincent (1996) 35 & 77-8, quoting from the *Cartulary of St.Peter & Paul* at Bath.
46 Vincent (1996).

It is noticeable how frequently the canons of this era are witnesses to charters in the cartulary. Giles of Bridport and Aubrey de Vitriaco, for instance, feature in 10 documents each. This is in marked contrast to the late thireenth and fourteenth century when canons are never, ever, witnesses. Such is the impression of involvement by Peter des Roches's men in the affairs of Wherwell, one wonders if the bishop was pursuing a policy of packing monastic chapters with his men. This is a negative interpretation, but it remains conceivable that Winchester represented just the sort of episcopal power-house that the papacy was trying to check. Barraclough has commented that the 'suppression of the power of bishops' was one of the papacy's main motives for encouraging the growth of provisions.[47] Peter des Roches, renowned for his military and political skills, was not a popular man in Rome.

To summarize, early thirteenth-century Wherwell was untroubled by *insolencia clericorum romanorum*, it only appears at Wherwell during the later years of abbess Euphemia when she stood firm against John Lettacorvus in the 1250s. This mirrors the mood in the country as a whole.

The rebellion led by Robert Twenge in 1232 is one of the most important indicators of growing popular resentment against papal provisions in the first part of the century; popular in the sense that it was a rebellion orchestrated by secular lords. The battle at the church door between Robert Twenge's men and an Italian who tried to take a church by force prefigures the confrontation at Middleton between the men of Wherwell abbey and Bartholemew *de S.Angelo's* proctors in 1296.[48] Twenge's actions showed that resistance to papal provisions was mounting during the pontificate of

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47 Barraclough (1935) 126, 130.

Gregory IX. The incident demonstrated the link between secular and ecclesiastical concerns and the strength of feeling in the country as a whole. It was a rebellion both against papal provisions and against the appointment of aliens to benefices whose advowsen was owned by lay lords. It was accompanied by widespread disorder and the seizure of goods belonging to foreign provisors.[49] When Robert Tweng's case was examined by the pope, Gregory admitted that there had been abuse of provisions and attempted to check its worse manifestations. Would this sort of conflict affect attitudes at Wherwell?

The disturbances certainly reached Salisbury where there was a battle between the papal agent, John Romanus, and a royal, secular appointee. John was trying to secure a benefice for Thomas *de S. Stephano*, a nephew of Gregory IX against the wishes of the king.[50] It is significant that there was so much pressure, he gave in. Wherwell chapter would have been well aware of this as the conflict was notorious. The abbey had three major links with the diocese of Salisbury; firstly, Giles of Bridport, then Archdeacon of Berkshire, was a frequent visitor to the abbey in his role as canon; secondly, the abbey had links with Salisbury through Collingbourne, which was in the Salisbury diocese; thirdly, when Abbess Euphemia wanted a proctor to represent her against John Lettacorvus in Italy, she chose a Salisbury man. This was William of Wyle, a canon of Salisbury cathedral.[51]

It is tempting to think that Euphemia identified in some measure with the vigorous mood of Salisbury in these years, with Giles of Bridport's founding of de Vaux

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48 *Chron. Roger of Wendover III*, 18-19; Mackenzie (1929), 194.
49 *Flores*, 202.
50 *Reg. Osmund*, 83, 93-9. Mackenzie (1929), 193.
51 *CPR 1266-72*, 505; *Sarum Charters & Documents* (1891) RS., 295; *VCH Wilts III*, 370.

College for scholars, and with the building of its magnificent new cathedral. It is sad that she missed the consecration of the cathedral in 1258.[52] She had died the previous year. Abbess Euphemia did not regard herself or her chapter as under-educated and underprivileged, dependent on Italian clerks from Rome. In the spirit of the times, native-born and native educated people were as good, if not better. Wherwell Abbey was not isolated from the mainstream of national events, and its links with Salisbury might well have been as important an influence on it as its links with Winchester, its home diocese.

Winchester was even more embroiled in the political problems of the realm than Salisbury because on the death of Peter des Roches in 1238, Henry III tried to secure the bishopric for his uncle, William of Valence. This was in direct conflict with the wishes of the monks who wanted the Bishop of Norwich, William Raleigh. It is worth taking note of this conflict in the context of the Wherwell material because the whole diocese would have been affected. On account of the dispute the see was actually vacant from 1238-1243, and the battle got even worse when William Raleigh finally won with the backing of the pope in 1244. There were undignified scenes in the city when Henry III tried to block his entry into Winchester and Henry threatened the monks.[53] He pursued his ambition of securing the see for his family when William Raleigh died in 1250. This time he promoted his half-brother Aymer of Valence and the cries of indignation were even worse.[54] Recent research has vindicated Aymer's conduct in the diocese,[55] but nevertheless, Carpenter makes the point that opposition to Valence was critical to the

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52 *AM I*, 166.
53 D.A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London, 1996), 40; *VCH Hants II*, 14.
54 *Flores II*, 380-1; *Chron. Maj. V*, 373.
55 H.W. Ridgeway (1996)

1258 rebellion. Surely these events politicised the diocese and affected Abbess Euphemia's attitude to authority. It was during this period of conflict and turmoil at Winchester that the battles with John Lettacorvus were going on.

Matthew Paris has been criticised for over sensationalising things, but his many descriptions of the hated papal agents mirror in an uncanny way the goings on both at Wherwell and in the diocese of Salisbury and Winchester. Euphemia can only have agreed with his biting descriptions of Martin *de Camera*, who initiated John Lettacorvus's bid for the Wherwell benefice:

> this careful inquisitor turned his eyes upon all the vacant churches and
>
> prebendal stalls, that he might with them supply the demands of papal wants[56]

Euphemia knew as well as Matthew that the involvement of Berard *de Nympha* in the Lettacorvus case meant she was up against an unyielding papal servant. Matthew accused him of 'fraudulently extorting money from the poor by authority of the pope'[57]. These problems were surely common talk in monastic and ecclesiastic circles. The Wherwell documents mention over a dozen Italian clerics in the service of the pope, by name. They intruded themselves into church life at this time and that they were resented.

Was Euphemia, aware, too of the outspoken stand taken by Bishop Grosseteste in the 1250s ? He brought the full weight of his intellect and his rhetoric to speak out against no less than the forces of anti-Christ.

> The bishop rebuked the prelates, especially the Romans, for entrusting the cure
>
> of souls to their relatives, who were unfit for it.

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[56] *Chron.Maj. IV*, 284-5; 374-6.

He challenged fellow clerics to stand up agains this evil:

> As an obedient son, I do not obey, I contradict, I rebel.
>
> He who fails to oppose this manifest crime, is not free from being a secret accomplice therein.[58]

Perhaps Euphemia saw herself as making a principled stand against this declared corruption at the heart of the church; after all, did she not withstand excommuniction for her stand against John Lettacorvus? This was a serious matter for a devout abbess in the final years of her life with responsibilities to her community.

The ill-feeling can only have been exacerbated by the financial pressures which were put on religious houses at this time. The activities of the papal tax collectors in the 1240s following the Council of Lyon's call to crusade, were all carefully noted down by Matthew Paris[59] and have been meticulously studied by Lunt and others.[60] No institution was spared these financial demands. Suffice to say, that these were onorous, and the tension was made worse by the fact that they were linked to a large and unsuccessful crusading effort which affected many households in the Salisbury-Winchester area as the leader was William Longespée II, who like his father, the first Earl of Salisbury, was buried in Salisbury Cathedral. The exactions can only have raised the blood pressure of everybody who was active in church affairs and fuelled anti-papal and anti-royal feeling. The evidence points to Abbess Euphemia being thus affected.[61]

The determined defence made by the Abbess and convent of Wherwell against John Lettacorvus spans the years that preceed the barons' revolt with all its tensions. At

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57 *ibid V*, 707.
58 *ibid V*, 404-7.
59 M. Paris, *Historia Anglicanum II*, ed. RS 44, 430, 436, 451, 491 etc; & *III*, 12, 16, 35 etc. check
60 W.E. Lunt, *The Valuation of Norwich* (Oxford, 1926), 54ff.

the 1245 council of Lyons there were complaints about 'the unsupportable exactions made by legates and nuncios on behalf of the pope.' The Lettacorvus case started in 1248. Both Carpenter and Maddicott claim that there was 'mounting xenophobia' in these years[62] emotions which Simon de Montfort sought to exploit for his own benefit.[63] Much of the criticism against aliens was levelled at the Lusignan and Savoyard elements at the centre of government, but the baronial leaders of the campaign sought to purge all aliens from positions of power.[64] The timing of the Wherwell evidence gives the impression that Wherwell abbey, like the church as a whole, was deeply influenced by this baronial led movement.

It is also possible that the common people became enboldened by the same resentment against aliens, for they were politicized in the run up to the Baron's war. They continued in this tradition when they turned out in force at Middleton to protest at the institution of Bartholemew *de S. Angelo*. It is an interesting thought that the Abbess of Wherwell might have been defending the pride of the local community - the peasants - as much her chapter, when she sought to reserve benefices for native born men. The appointment of aliens apparently gave great offence to the villagers themselves as much in the 1250s as in the 1290s. It was they who saw their tithes go to a non-English speaking alien and these tithes were the fruit of their own labours. Thus they would have agreed with Matthew Paris who complained about the contemptible aliens, unworthy of dignity and ignorant of English ways who robbed the church of its riches.[65]

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61 A sluggish response to the papal tax demands is evident in **255.**

62 D.A. Carpenter, 'King Henry III's Statute against aliens,' *EHR* (1992), 933, 937; *Flores III*, 257.

63 J. Maddicot, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), 231-2.

64 *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform & Rebellion* ed. R.F. Treharne & I.J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973), 90-5; 254-5.

65 *Chron. Maj. IV*, 184.

Returning to the clergy themselves, the idea that the unwelcome demand for benefices was led by desperate clerks, at home and abroad, rather than the pope and his cardinals, is not borne out by the evidence at Wherwell. We do not see 'an absurd number of expectants' fighting over a single benefice[66], or an unseemly scramble of poor clerks pestering the pope for benefices belonging to the Abbess and convent, rather the benefices were cherry picked by prominent curial officials like Martin *de Camera* and Ottobuono himself for their chosen candidates. The finger particularly points at Ottobuono, as both John Lettacorvus and Ardico *de Tridano* were his personal chaplains. Ottobuono's mission of reconciliation between 1265-68, made itself felt at Wherwell only in his stern letter to the Abbess, and it reinforces the feeling that the policy of the papal curia was to frighten houses like Wherwell into submission to the papal will, and to persist with the policy of trying to keep an outside presence in the monastic houses of Hampshire, which of course they succeeded in doing by securing a foreign presence at Middleton in the shape of Berard of Naples. Ottobuono's prohibition was a general one, but it seemed to be delivered with personal bite.[67]

Perhaps Matthew Paris's rhetoric was not so misleading, either. In Wherwell's case, he seems to almost have had inside knowledge of the facts. On close examination, though, there are flaws. His description of Martin *de Camera* grabbing revenues of the treasurership of Salisbury, mentioned above in relation to Collingbourne, is dated 1244, and is normally attributed to the moving of Roger, precentor of Salisbury to the see of Bath & Wells rather than the ousting of Robert Karville. In essence though, Matthew Paris gives a true picture. Clanchy on the whole took a positive view of Matthew Paris's

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66 Barraclough (1934), 213.

account of the Alton Robbery of 1248 . He took the view that Paris was 'not basically unreliable, but only superficially unreliable.' [68] The Wherwell evidence seems to underline this valuable point about Matthew Paris and therefore has wider significance than a mere discussion of provisions.

Some of Matthew Paris's most striking passages expressing ill feeling against alien clergy, are put into the mouth of Grosseteste.[69] The rumour that favours were being granted to nephews of the pope was particularly interesting in view of the Wherwell evidence. John Lettacorvus was no nephew of the pope, but his patron Ottobuono was. Thomas Pappazurri was no nephew either, but the man who he displaced, Robert Karville had to buy off Master Marinus to the tune of 100 marks until he could get a benefice, and he was a nephew of the pope. Ardicio, like Lattacorvus, was a chaplain of Ottobuono. These rumours were not without foundation. It does seem that pressure on Wherwell originally came either from the popes themselves, or the cardinals such as Ottobuono and later, the Colonnas. Sometimes, it was perhaps a question of papal favouritism, the name Pappazurri means 'pope's favourite.'

The focus of this analysis of the problems of provisions has been upon the resentment against aliens which began in the mid. thirteenth century, not earlier. Since pre-conquest days the church in England had been led, dominated, renovated and inspired by aliens, albeit not exclusively. Alien clergy were not a new phenomenom, so the implication is that during this century it was different. Perhaps this was because the

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67 *CPL I*, 430; Gibbs & Lang (1934), 73.
68 M. Clanchy, 'Robbery in the Pass of Alton,' in *Medieval Legal Records in memory of C.A.F. Meekings*, ed. R.F. Hunnisett & J.B. Post (London, 1978), 48.
69 *Chron.Maj. VI*, 324-5, 355, 389-92, 404-7, 429-30.

Italian papal appointees of the thirteenth century were not members of the Anglo-Norman elite. They were non-resident aliens, and in Wherwell's case, they were cardinals' men.

There is much less information in the Wherwell sources about the aftermath of all this, but the evidence suggests that there was a reduction in the number of Italians being promoted by those close to the heart of the papacy. The only ones who stand out are John Beccardi who was awarded a prebend in 1329, Walter *de Altrachia* in 1330, and Robert *de Turre de Adria*, a papal writer for whom the Pope claimed Middleton in 1343 on the elevation of Robert de Stratford to the Bishopric of Chichester; they were all later.[70] This latter claim did give rise to an incident in that a local man, Philip *de Ingepenne*, attempted to take the prebend of Middleton, cutting out the papal claimant.[71] This was very much in the tradition of the earlier resistance against Bartholemew *de St. Angelo* put up by Philip of Barton, and represents the only obvious continuation of old grievances against the papacy.[72]

The dearth of evidence in the cartulary about the fourteenth-century canons is made up for by the data in the royal, episcopal and papal sources. The records show a marked increase in the number of royal appointeees taking Wherwell canonries, and it has already been noted that the distinction between royal and papal nominees became blurred, as the general trend was for all candidates to seek a papal provision. Amongst those most closely associated with the king was Thomas of Canterbury, who was made canon in 1301.[73] He was a king's clerk, and together with John Sandale went several

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70 *CPL II*, 300, 342, & *III*, 78.
71 See Chapter 4.3 on Henry le Wayte. Philip *de Ingepenne* was a kinsman.
72 *CPL II* , 298; *CPP I*, 17; *Reg. Edington I*, 24.
73 *CPL I*, 593.

times on king's business to Aquitaine and Gascony.[74] John Drokensford was another.[75] From being a Controller of the Wardrobe of Edward I, and travelling frequently with the king to Scotland, he was rewarded with numerous benefices, including prebends in Lincoln, St. David's, Chichester, Winchester and York. He became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1308.[76] Robert de Stratford was perhaps even more prominent, again being active on king's service overseas as a clerk, and being one of his chancellors. He was elevated to the bishopric of Chichester in 1343; as a brother of John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester (1323-1333), he also gained wide experience and favour, acting several times as his attorney.[77] The biggest gainer of them all was the favoured William Wykeham, who enjoyed the revenues of 11 prebends including Wherwell, finally gaining the see of Winchester (1367-1404).

Some of those close to the royal court were also closeley associated with the diocese, such as Richard Woodlock, nephew of Henry Woodlock, Bishop of Winchester (1305-16).[78] Philip of Barton, who had put up such a fight against Bernard *de S. Angelo* at Middleton remained in both the Abbess's and the Bishop of Winchester's favour, becoming Archdeacon of Surrey and gaining in the end, the prebend of Wherwell. Andrew Brugge was another who served both the king and the bishop, being rewarded with a canonry at Chichester. Meanwhile in 1352, Thomas of Enham was presented by William Orleton and Adam *de Aylton* was one of Adam Orleton's faithful clerks.[79]

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74 *CCR* 1301-7, 55, 116, 137, 140, 142.
75 *Reg. Gand., II*, 635-7, also Dawes's introduction, xlvii -l. See too *Reg. Pont, I*, 175 & *CPL II*, 39.
76 *Dictionary of National Biography.*
77 *CCR 1327-30*, 110, 183, 285, 517, 543 etc.; *CPR 1321-24*, 41, 190, 245: *1324-27*, 50, 84, 129; *1327-30*, 28, 30, 63 etc.
78 *CPR 1307-13*, 382; *1321-24*, 239.
79 *CPP 1342-1417*, 57-9; Haines (1978), 97.

The local men who were awarded prebends should not be forgotten, however. Pre-eminent amongst them was Henry le Wayte, but there was also notorious Nicholas Talemache, for whose shortcomings the abbess attempted to appropriate the rectory (**54-57**), and John of Shaftesbury. There were also John Wake and Richard Deneby, who had been involved in acquiring the lands of William atte Mulle. Richard Deneby had to step down from the prebend of Bathwick, because he was discovered to have been occupying it illegally since the death of his predecessor, Walter of Aldeby. Unbeknownst to the king, who had presented Richard, Walter had died in Rome, thus the right to present belonged to the pope.[80] This was typical of the muddle that occurred because of these rules. It will be remembered that it was the dispute over whether Berard of Naples had died at Rome or not which caused the trouble at Middleton.

There was even more confusion with John Wake. He was presented to the prebend of Wherwell by Abbess Johanna (1361-1375),[81] but this time it was the king who protested; he claimed that because of the vacancy following the death of Abbess Constancia in November 1361, he had the right to present. This case is meticulously reported in the cartulary, and it demonstrates how one misunderstanding followed another [**A**] f.212: [**B**] f.213. A ruling had already been given at Westminster in 1363 against John Wake's appointment, but William Wykeham took his place, and he too created a vacancy when he became bishop of Winchester in 1356; this time the pope claimed the right to present. The vacancies, both in the prebend itself and in the abbey, created endless problems, continuing until 1393/4, when all the claims and counterclaims were presented at Westminster. By this time the prebend was being held by John Felbrygge,

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80 *CPR 1374-7*, 382-3. His original award of the prebend is however in *CPR 1364-67*, 201.

but this was challenged by Robert, the king's almoner, in 1392, who had obtained letter of appointment from the king, despite John Felbrygge's 15 year-old occupation [B] f.231. John Felbrygge was obliged to explain the background to the case and the details of his own appointment in 1376; king's counsel giving his version of the events. In the end, however, John's appointment to the prebend, according the conditions of Gregory XI's papal bull of 1370, was accepted by the king, and the king's almoner lost his attempt to obtain Wherwell.

The full compexity of the system of prebendal appointments is made clear by this case. It also demonstrates the ease with which the king could be embarrassed by his own clerks, and defeated by his own record keeping: the almoner was able to get letters of appointment from the king for his admission to the prebend, when John Felbrygge, himself a king's clerk, was already in possession.

One problem does recur in the records, however, which surely made things difficult for everyone. Not all those who were granted provisions in the end got benefices; the names of expectant clerks who appear in no other source fill the papal registers, and then they vanish.[82] Nor, at this time, could you be guaranteed a prebend at Wherwell even if you were a canon:

> John Devenish, Abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, granted his brother Thomas Devenish a canonry in Salisbury. He already has the church of Eston, a canonry at Wherwell and an expectation of a prebend there.[83]

In this case, and others, there is a clear distinction between the holding of a canonry and the possession of a prebend, a distinction which was not apparent a century earlier. This

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81 *Reg. Edington I*, 193.

would have had financial implication, but how the benefits were distributed amongst the active and expectant clergy is not clear. Those who had benefices obviously served them in widely differing ways, the most prominent of the holders, like Robert Stratford, surely providing minimal service in comparison with Henry le Wayte who devoted his life to the service of the abbey.[84] The vicarage system was now well established and it is doubtful if any of the canons actually exercised cure of souls within Wherwell's parishes, for this reason, most of the appointments to vicarages had an obligation of residency.[85]

The fluctuating relationship between the king and succeeding popes and its effect on provisions has been carefully studied. Edward III's action to prevent the admission of aliens into church benefices in 1351 might account for the absence of foreign encumbants at Wherwell, but the evidence is scarcely obvious, and more and more the king and his English clerks were beginning to use the system of papal provisions to their own good. Thus the distinction between a papal and a royal provision was blurred.[86]

But there were moments of tension as when the king insisted on the right to bring benefices belonging to any vacant abbey or bishopric into the gift of the crown on a permanent basis. This new policy was highly controversial[87] and the question of how to resolve disputed cases became a point of principle.[88] But the king was not the only improvisor of rules, John XXII (1316-34) had also introduced new rules concerning the

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82 Pantin (1955), 62.
83 *PPP I*, 335.
84 For a discussion on these two aspects of benefice holding, see Pantin (1955), 35.
85 For instance, *Reg.Edington I*, 35, 65,
86 Deeley (1928).
87 W.M. Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III* (Yale, 1990), 124. The whole of chapter 7 considers the church under Edward III.
88 Cheyette (1963).

reservation of benefices in his term of office, so the century was punctuated by inflammatory gestures instituted by both sides followed by real efforts at conciliation and compromise.

The significant point as far as Wherwell is concerned is that the unwelcome presence of aliens did not create major problems at Wherwell in the fourteenth century, rather the pressure of royal clerks had become the greater issue.[89] Insolence of the Roman clerks, had given way to insolence of the royal clerks.

5.3. The struggle over the forest

Nowhere was the issue of tension between the king and the abbess of Wherwell more apparent than in the struggle over Harewood Forest. Two areas of dispute developed: '*vert*' in the thirteenth century and '*venison*' in the fourteenth century. The conflict culminated in two extreme claims. On the one hand the king's foresters were to assert that the Wherwell woods were demesne woods of the crown, on the other, successive abbesses insisted that Harewood was not in the royal forest at all. The king placed Harewood within the forest of Chute.

Naturally it would be of great help if we knew the extent of the abbey's woods at the time of the foundation around 986, but the first record which provides any reliable clue is the Domesday survey, which says that the abbey held a wood in Wherwell for 25 swine and woodland for fencing at Tufton and Ann.[90]

There are no charters in the cartulary to indicate that the abbey was granted new woodlands in later centuries, suggesting that the boundaries remained fairly static; in fact

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89 Perhaps this is apparent in 443 and the later [A] f.212.

90 *DB*, 15-17.

there was some diminishment through assarting.[91] At the time of the dissolution it was said that the monasteries the abbey held 'the whole wood in the county of Southampton which is called Harewood, containing 600 acres' in addition to 'Upyn Copse' which it describes as containing 220 acres. [92] This copse is clearly marked on the ordnance map of today as part of Harewood. The map also shows that the forest amounts to around 800 acres (Part II, Fig.1). This is predominantly oak woodland with hazel coppice, rising gently above the meadows which bound the River Test. Perhaps it was always so.

In addition to Harewood Forest, the abbey held *Abboteswode*, conceivably the present Great Wood, near Abbott's Anne. Some records also name the woodlands of Stonehanger, Anne and Eastover, but almost all all the evidence covered concerns Harewood (Part II, Fig.21).

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the issue of forest boundaries was one of the bitterest causes of tension between the crown and its subjects. The royal forest was probaby conceived and created by the Conqueror. His love of hunting and his categorising large areas of land, both wooded and un-wooded as 'forest' is well known and caused widespread resentment. The forests came to extend well beyond the demesne woods of the crown and embraced woods that private lords such as the Abbess of Wherwell claimed as their own.[93] The king imposed harsh laws to protect both venison and vert and penalized owners for making clearances, cutting wood, running dogs, carrying weapons and doing anything which might disturb the hunting which they

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91 See above, Chapter 3.2. above.

92 *Monasticon II*, 640.

93 M.L. Bazeley, 'The extent of the forest in the 13th.c.,' *TRHS* 4th.Series, 4 (1921).

claimed as their prerogative.[94] It is not clear when Wherwell was first deemed to be in the royal forest but it was probably during the reign of Henry II.[95] Henry not only reclaimed as royal forest areas lost under Stephen, but pushed the bounds further than they had been in 1135. Thus the first reference to Wherwell and its forest in official records of this period is in the Pipe Rolls for 1167-68 under the heading 'pleas of Alan de Neville', forester to the king. Geoffrey, the forester of Wherwell had to pay 20s. into the exchequer as a forest fine, probably as payment for a concession granted to the abbey by the king, such as a licence to assart an area of woodland for cultivation.[96] The granting of this licence presumes that the abbess's woods were within the bounds of the royal forest and under royal jurisdiction.

Along with everyone else, this presumption would have been resented by the abbess, and all the more so as the century progressed for Richard and John were to exploit Henry II's afforestations for all they were worth. Indeed the royal demands so alienated and frustrated private landlords that they forced through the Charter of the Forest in 1217 in the wake of the 'Magna Carta', and pressed tirelessly for what they saw as its fair and honest implementation in the following decade, forcing the king's ministers to accede to their demands.[97] It is against this background of growing tension that in 1199 we at last find a charter which refers to Harewood Forest by name. Once more it assumes the king's claim to jurisdiction over the abbey's woods: it is a licence granted by Richard I to the abbey, to assart and cultivate 80 acres of land, 40 of which are in Harewood and 40 in Tufton. This grant enabled Abbess Matilda to cultivate the land

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94 E. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and notes supplementary to Stubb's Constitutional History, Vol II* (Manchester, 1914), 173.
95 J.F. Winters, 'The Forest Eyre 1154-1368,' Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London (1999), 7.
96 *PR 13 Henry II*, 184.

without fear of the king's foresters penalizing her, as they were no longer entitled to inspect this land during one of their periodic 'regards' of the forest (2).[98] She took four years to pay the 40 marks required for this licence into the exchequer.[99] Richard's charter does not address the problem of the abbey's original foundation. It is not a confirmation of what the abbey already claimed as its own. The charter is merely giving it permission to clear a part of its woodland, yet it does suggest that the king considered Harewood to be a private forest within the royal forest and subject to his authority.

There is no evidence that the abbess contested this in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but it is inconceivable that she did not share the resentment of the many who finally brought such pressure to bear on the crown that the young Henry III was forced to attempt to clarify the uncertainties regarding the boundaries of the royal forests by ordering extensive 'perambulations' throughout the counties. The owners of woods like the abbey of Wherwell hoped these would put the clock back to the time of the first coronation of Henry II as the Forest Charter appeared to promise.[100] Though we know that perambulations took place in Hampshire, none survive from this time to record details about Harewood, but it gradually emerges that it was regarded as being within the metes and bounds of that part of the royal forest of Chute forest which was in Hampshire, as opposed to the part that was in Wiltshire. Chute Forest itself was not clearly defined as an entity until 1215, but it seems to have boasted a forester since the eleventh century.[101] The records show that perambulations were done in part, not in whole. The Wherwell cartulary has a record of one made around Andover at the end of the

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97 D.A. Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (1990), 62-3, 89-91, 168-9, 277-9.

98 See too *CChR 1257-1300*, 30.

99 *PR 3 John*, 110; *4 John*, 201; *5 John* 139.

100 D.A. Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (Berkeley, 1990), 91, 168-9. Bazeley (1921), 149.

thirteenth century, but it makes no mention of Harewood (**355**), nor does another of the middle of the century covering Whitchurch, Bullington, Stockbridge and Clatford, which lie to the east and south of Harewood.[102] There is a rare perambulation map, however, which does survive: it has an entry marking the 'demesne of the abbess of Wherwell outside the forest.' (Part II, Fig, 22).[103] The hand suggests it belongs to the fourteenth century, and it gives a good idea of how complex a job the making of perambulations could be. However, the entry poses the possibility that the local knights who did this work were entering fanciful returns in order to reverse the afforestations made in the time of Henry II. The phrase '*extra forestam*' seems optimistically to contradict all the evidence uncovered so far. Richard's charter had only freed the abbey from interference on those specific areas of woodland that she had sought permission to assart. Presumably the rest of Harewood was subject to the general forest law meaning that no-one could assart without permission from the king.[104] The Assise of the Forest of 1184 spelt out the demands of the king with uncompromising clarity.[105]

> 'The lord king has commanded that his foresters shall have care to the forest of the knights and others who have woods within the bounds of the royal forest, in order that the woods be not destroyed..... if in spite of this, the woods be destroyed.....reparation will be exacted'.

Only by the purchase of a special licence, such as the one bought by Matilda, could any clearance or building works be undertaken. There is more evidence of the ongoing

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101 *VCH Wiltshire IV*, 424.
102 PRO C47/12/9.
103 WCMC, no. 2206.
104 '*Dialogus de Scaccario*' *by Richard son of Nigel*, ed. A. Hughes, C.G. Crump & C. Johnson (Oxford, 1902), 102-3.

restrictions and expenses suffered by the abbey: in 1252 the abbess was permitted by the warden of the forest of Chute to take wood from Harewood 'which is within the metes of the king's forest' in order to construct a causeway.[106] Again in 1276 she received permission to take 20 acres of underwood 'in her wood of Harewood.'[107] Failure to gain permission would have been an offence of 'vert' and fineable. In 1296 she was granted a licence to fell 60 acres of underwood in Harewood as long as she enclosed it afterwards.[108] The issuing of licences was clearly a useful source of revenue for the crown. The claim in the perambulation chart that Wherwell was outside the forest gave the abbey no protection from these regulations in the thirteenth century. The local knights who did the perambulation chart were clearly over optimistic that they could reverse afforestations made way back in the time of Henry II, and their claims were apparently ignored. Harewood was truly a private wood within the royal forest and subject to its laws.

When considering the rights of Wherwell Abbey, it should be remembered that the years around 1280 were critical ones for private lords because they were obliged to have their claims to lands and liberties tested in the courts following Edward I's initiation of the *Quo Warranto* proceedings. Thus in the General Eyre of 1280/1 in Hampshire, the jury submitted that the abbess and convent of Wherwell held the manor of Wherwell 'with the wood of Harewode' along with all the other named 'vills' 'in chief of the king in free alms.'[109]

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105 'Assize of the Forest,' cap. 5. *Select Charters*, ed. W. Stubbs, 9th. edition (Oxford, 1913), 187; *EHD II*, 452.

106 *CR 1251-53*, 69.

107 *CCR 1272-79*, 267.

108 *CPR 1292-1301*, 183.

109 PRO JUST 1/786, m.30; JUST 1/784, m.12; JUST 1/789, m.25.

The abbess also had to send a representative to the special forest eyres. They were known to have taken place in Hampshire in 1229, 1244, 1256/7,1261/2 1269 and 1279/80.[110] The first surviving forest eyre roll relating to Chute Forest in Hampshire is the roll for the eyre of 1279/80.[111] It records that the abbess sent Adam of Entham as her representative. The number of recorded '*vert*' offences covers several membranes and about ten of these offenders came from Wherwell, East Aston or Middleton. Presumably it was the abbess's officials who presented these cases to the eyre, and it shows that men within her lands were liable to amercements by the king's forest court.

The Assize of the Forest laid down that 'all who have woods within the bounds of the royal forest' should 'install foresters in their woods.'[112] In fact we know that the abbess did have her own chief forester, and that this office was hereditary, by custom if not by law. In 1257, Thomas Wyke, son of Geoffrey the Forester, resigned his custodianship of the forest of Harewood to the Abbess Euphemia (**228,417**). He was probably a grandson of the Geoffrey cited in the Pipe rolls of 1167. Roger Forester, another holder of the same office resigned in 1317 (**229**). He was the third in his family line to hold the office. All would have been responsible for running the abbey's woodlands perhaps in a similar way to the foresters in the honour of Tutbury whose detailed records survive.[113] Wherwell sources are not specific about the duties of the chief forester. Although they were appointed privately, it seems that they were answerable to the king's forester, which in the abbey's case was the warden of Chute.

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110 C.R. Young, 'The Forest Eyre during the 13th.c.' in *American Journal of English History 18 1*(1974); *Calendar of New Forest Documents* ed. D.J. Stagg (HRS, 1979), 15. Winters (1999), 17-23, 33-5, 292-297, 381-384, 421-447.

111 PRO E32/161.

112 'Assize of the Forest' cap. 4, *Select Charters* (1913) 187; *EHD II*, 452.

The abbess would have had to present cases to the warden through her forester. Foresters of a private wood within the bounds of the king's forest, with the help of some under foresters of their own appointing, were obliged to effect and record 'attachments' of '*vert*' offenders. The forester submitted these to verderers, appointed by the sheriff in the county court, and they in turn would present these 'to the head forester when he arrived in those parts to hold forest pleas', in other words, at the next forest eyre.[114]

One wonders what privileges the Abbess did enjoy. The Assize of the Forest said 'the king graciously allows' anyone who has a wood within the royal forest 'to take from their woods what they need, but this is to be done without wasting and at the oversight of the king's forester [115] making her own forester accountable to the king. This seems to conflict with the evidence of the abbess having to pay for a licence to take wood to build a causeway. However, on a more basic level, although the abbey's right take wood for housing and fencing is not spelt out in any of the Wherwell sources, it is implied by the fact that the abbess passed on this right to favoured tenants as an act patronage. One charter, for instance, records a major grant of land at Toppemulle and it refers amongst other appurtenances such as a mill, dovecot and garden, to 'one tree trunk (*lignum*) in Harewood to be taken annually' (**154,155**). Eustace of Gavelacre was another beneficiary; he was allowed to take a tree-trunk each year for the repair of the mill at Forton (**38**). Walter Erkebande claimed part of the forest of Harewood itself. He made a grant of all his land in Forton plus 'my wood (*boscum*) in Harewood together with an allowance of firewood (**26**). It is not clear how many of the abbess's tenants could lay

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[113] J. Birrel, 'The forest economy in the honour of Tutbury in the 14th & 15th c,' in *University of Birmingham Historical Journal VIII* (1962).

[114] 'Charter of the Forest' cap. 16 *Select Charters* (1913), 347; *EHD III*, 340. Stagg (1979), 20-23. *Select Pleas of the Forest* ed. G.Turner, SS 13 (1901), .xvii. - .xxv.; Petit-Dutaillis II (1914), 158-60.

claim to part of the forest as Walter did or what responsibiliy such ownership carried If they were comparable to the 'wards' into which the forests of Tutbury were divided into, then the responsibilities were considerable.[116]

Grazing rights were another valuable privilege, but they were monitored too: 'the king forbids anyone to graze cattle in his own woods, if they lie within the bounds of the forest, before the king's woods have been pastured.'[117] This was a seasonal restriction which was normally supervised by officers called 'agisters'. Several charters in the Wherwell cartulary show the abbess granting rights of pannage and pasture to tenants, but ordinarily she could claim a pannage fee, such that charged to St.Swithun's Priory in the neighbouring manor of Chilbolton.[118]

The goings on in the woods of Wherwell Abbey touched the lives of all the local inhabitants including the common peasantry. The woods were their chief source of fuel, their place of labour (for instance the carting of wood for the abbess was a condition of some tenure), and a place where they enjoyed common rights of pasture and pannage. These benefits would have been augmented by profits made by legitimate sale of wood, as for those who had bought rights to collect brushwood, as is apparent from the *compotus* roll cited above, and no doubt some made illigitimate sales as well.[119]

The woods were also places of danger. John, son of Robert of Wynton was found crushed beneath a fallen branch in 1280, presumably a tragic accident[120] but in the same year Adam of Langford and his wife Amicia were murdered in Wherwell woods by

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115 'Assize of the forest,' cap.3, *Select Charters* 187; *EHD II*, 451.
116 Birrell (1962), 116.
117 'Assize of the Forest,' cap.7, *Select Charters* 187; *EHD II*, 452.
118 *Manor of Chilbolton* (1954), 249, 265, 364.
119 J. Birrel, 'Forest Law in late 13th.c. England,' in *Thirteenth Century England II*, ed. P.R.Cross & S.D. Lloyd (1988), 149, 151, 161.

William Warthyl who was exacted and outlawed for the crime.[121] Henry Dikorn had met a similar fate eight years before.[122] These cases are reminders of the human stories against which the battles for jurisdiction of the woods must be placed and which necessarily make up the main part of this study.

We have seen that in the thirteenth century the main preoccupations of the king's foresters were to protect the woods, grazing and cover by placing prohibitions on felling, clearing, enclosing land. These issues did not die down in the fourteenth century, owing largely to the behaviour of the king's foresters. Aggrieved lords had made it clear in Edward III's first parliament that they sought remedy for the wrongdoings perpetrated during the turbulent reign of his father. The 1325 parliament had complained:

> 'The ministers of the forest have again taken into the forest, lands and woods as entirely as they were at any time, contrary to the charter ..... and cause ditches to be thrown down and interfere with their cultivation'.

Edward III was thus compelled to start his reign by attending to these grievances. He promised that his foresters should henceforth abide by the Charter of the Forest, and that the boundaries set during the perambulations of Edward I should stand.[123] These seemed like promising concessions. He then proceeded to re-invigorate the Forest Eyre, which came to Hampshire in 1330; here, the Abbess had to lay out in full her claims to exemption from charges for assarts, both old and new. Richard's charter had been confirmed in 1262 in an '*inspeximus*' by Henry III, and this and other charters relating to

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120 PRO JUST 1/784.
121 PRO JUST 1/789
122 PRO JUST 1/780

the abbey were all meticulously enrolled.[124] An assart made by Eustace of Gavelacre way back in the time of Abbess Euphemia eighty or so years before was also reported, and the 40 acres in Harewood were once again brought to the attention of the justices in the 'regard' roll, just as they had been in 1280.[125] All this detail recorded in 1330 amounted to a complete overhaul of the state of Chute Forest.

The state of the forest probably varied from region to region. The regarders roll for the 1330 Hampshire eyre records that the abbess of Wherwell had the wood called Harewood '*bene custoditur*' suggesting that the abbey was left to look after it itself and that the interference was minimal. Apparently this peaceful custody was to be enjoyed for another decade. During this time the abbess was able to extend her influence beyond her private forest of Harewood, as Edward granted her free warren in all her demesne lands in Wherwell, Middleton and further afield on her manor in the Isle of Wight (**80**).[126] This gave her the exclusive right to take small game freely without penalty. No mention is made of poachers.

In this time of reassessment at the beginning of the reign of Edward III, Abbess Isabella (1298-1333) was at pains to extract from the king an assurance that in times of voidance, the prioress and convent should have custody of all the abbey's temporalities and 'full and free administration of the same without interference from the escheator, sheriff, or bailiff of the king' (**78**).[127] This exemption specifically included matters relating to 'waste and the destruction of woods'. Edward III actually visited Wherwell

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123 N.Neilson, 'The Forests,' in *English Government at Work 1327-1336*, ed. J.F. Willard & W.A. Morris (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1940), 411-15. R. Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Stroud, 1991), 164-5.

124 PRO E32/164; *CChR. 1257-1300*, 29-31.

125 PRO E32/169; WCM no. 219.

126 See also *CChR 1327-41*, 234.

127 *CPR 1330-4*, 42.

in November 1331, so these concession could have been reinforced by personal reassurances.[128] These were not enough, however, to prevent more tension between the abbess and the king arising a decade later.

In 1343 the abbess wrote an impassioned plea to the king that she had been holding the forest of Harewood peacefully ever since the foundation of the abbey by *Alfreda* daughter of Osgar in 962, and now the king's officers were claiming that the wood was a demesne wood of the crown. She insisted that these officers were misinformed of the facts and had totally ignored the results of all previous ridings and perambulations, which had classified Harewood as being outside the authority of the forests ('*hors de daunger de forestres*') (**353**). On receipt of this petition, the king ordered a fresh inquiry to investigate the abbess's claim that his ministers were 'preventing the abbess from hunting therein and taking divers profits, as she and her predecessors from the time of the grant had been accustomed to.'

This inquiry, commissioned in 1344, was headed by William Shareshull,[129] who became Chief Justice in 1350. He is remembered for the success by which he raised revenue for the crown.[130] Perhaps Shareshull saw an opportunity for this at Wherwell, for on enquiring, he may well have concluded that the abbess had been enjoying uninterrupted rights of chase for years, without a proper legal warrant and attempted to check this. There can be no doubt that Shareshull found against the abbey. We know this because the Wherwell cartulary contains four other documents which set out the

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128 *CCR 1330-33*, 403.

129 *CPR 1343-5*, 386. It's not clear whether they saw the grant as being the original foundation charter, or the concessions made by Edward III in 1337.

130 S.L Waugh, *England in the Reign of Edward III* (Cambridge, 1991), 180.

abbess's complaints anew in the 1350s and they continue to complain vigorously (**68-71**):

> The king's ministers have recently afforested the wood, brought it into the forest of Chute and appointed foresters to keep the wood and game for the use of the Lord King, contrary to the ordinance made in the first year of his reign. ...The nuns have lost their right to free chase...free warren....and the pasturing of sheep.....The fencing has not been maintained leading to the neglect of the land by tenants...They, their tenants and their church face ruin (**68**). We beg our sovereign lord the king to grant special redress and remedy regarding the disinheritance of the church...by which the nuns are refused possession and use of their free chase in the wood called Harewood which has been outside the bounds of the forest since the foundation' (**71**).

The petition was put before the parliament of June 1354 eleven years after the king had ordered the commission of enquiry (**70**), and seventeen years after the hopeful concessions tranted by Edward at the start of his reign.

These documents bring the issue of 'venison' to the fore, suggesting that the king's ministers were hunting in Harewood without regard to the abbey and its tenants, and perhaps for the first time. It is not clear who traditionally hunted in Harewood and with what authority. There is no documentary evidence that the abbess had the right to free chase within her forests other than the claims she herself makes in the cartulary and the grant of free warren, which concerned the right to take small game only. She might therefore have had no real legal claim.

And what about unauthorised hunting ? In the 1280 forest eyre only one venison offence was presented relating to the abbeys's woods, though they were not identified as belonging to the abbey. This case concerned two knights of the household of the Bishop of Winchester who took a doe in Upping wood and carried it off to Wherwell where the bishop was staying, claiming it was for their lodging.[131] There is no record of any case of trespass in Harewood itself, though several men of Wherwell hundred are found guilty of venison offences, including the chaplain of Middleton, but his offence was committed in '*Halenden*', possibly present day Hatherden.[132] This suggests that either people were remarkably law-abiding, or that ministers left the custodianship of the venison in Harewood to the abbess. Alternatively it reflected the laxity of the administration of the forests of Harewood and Chute over generations.

The first half of the fourteenth century saw no forest eyre in Hampshire. 50 years of *laissez faire* contributed to the abbess's belief that she was entitled to freedom of chase, perhaps from time out of mind. The 1330 roll has a case which goes back to 'the eighth year of the reign of the king Edward son of Edward', meaning 1315 [133] There was one other 11 years later. These cases represent all the surviving evidence of venison offences in Harewood over a period of around 50 years. A similar pattern was recorded in the New Forest returns.[134]

This cannot be taken as evidence that cases of forest offences were not prosecuted in the absence of the eyre because in 1306 Edward I ordained that new Inquisitions should be set up to look into the state of the forest; they should be held before the

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131 PRO E32/161, r.11.
132 *ibid* r.10v.
133 PRO E32/169, r.2.
134 C.R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Leicester, 1979), 154.

foresters, verderers agisters and other forest officials and a jury of free-tenants.[135] They were in effect, newly constituted swanimote courts, and were meant to form the basis of more efficient local forest proceedure

There was a notable case presented at one of these Inquisitions in 1354 when the abbess was called to account for the behaviour of her haywood, William Chaplayn, who had gone into Harewood forest behind Middleton and brought down a buck with two mastiffs.[136]

Another Inquisition taken in 1361[137] shows how thorough the king's ministers were in investigating transgressions covering several years. They said that in 1359, Reginald Lawrence and the bailiff of Gavelacre, Adam *de Knytbrugge*, and others took two buck with nets from a croft called *Gavelscroft*. Two years later the same Adam went into Harewood with his greyhounds and took more venison. Richard Woodward of Wherwell and others took a buck with the greyhounds of the abbess between the field of Middleton and Harewood. The same Richard Woodward, together with Philip the vicar of Wherwell and John Taillour, servant of the vicar, took game, taking the dogs belonging to Roger of Clatford without him knowing. The jury pointed out that Richard Woodward had six nets, three belonging to Philip the vicar and three of his own 'for catching game of the lord king', and that he, with the help and assent Roger of Clatford and others, including the vicar, Peter, took twelve beasts of which eight were buck and made off with them.

The status of these men in interesting: Richard Woodward, as his name implies, might have been a forest official. Adam *de Knytebrugge* was the son of a well-to-do

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135 *Select Pleas of the Forest*, ed. G.J. Turner, SS 13 (1901), .xlvii.

tenant in Middleton and was witness to several charters; his possession of greyhounds also mark him out as being socially superior,[138] meanwhile, the rest had positions considerable responsibility in the community as overseer of harvest, vicar and bailiff. Their operations with nets suggest the expeditions were planned, of quite large scale and possibly habitual. Perhaps they were hunting legitimately according to custom, even catching game for the abbess's and vicar's larder? If the abbess believed she had a right to free chase, then might it not be people like this who would be out in the forest, taking game on her behalf and with her permission ? Or does the evidence suggest that the nuns themselves went hunting ? This seems unlikely.[139] As we know there was a conflict between the abbess and the king on the right to hunt in the woods around Wherwell, perhaps these men were hunting in defiance of recent rulings by the king's ministers with the knowledge of the abbess who persisted in believing she had the right to free chase.

The record of the Inquisition presented above survives in a single document to which the seals of the verderers and free tenants who made the report are attatched. No judgements are given. It is therefore a record of a presenting jury reporting a string of offences. A similar pattern of offences is contained in a document recording an Inquisition in Andover in 1362, marking Pater atte Wode's enquiry into the state of Chute Forest. Here a case is submitted wherby Adam Cook of Middleton, Richard Saunders and John Nichole of Barton brought down a fawn in Eastwode with their dogs.[140] A

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136 PRO E32/169.
137 PRO E3/310; E32/279.
138 J. Birrell, 'Peasant deer poachers in the medieval forest,' in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England*, ed. R. Britnell & J.Hatcher (1996), 76.
139 Power (1922), 308.
140 PRO E32/283.

presentment of 1365 also survives, still bearing all the seals of the regarders, whose names are noted;[141] the offenders include William Colyns, bailiff of the prebendary church of Goodworth, William, servant of the steward of the abbess of Wherwell and Walter one of her own men. They make off with game 'against the assize of the forest because the Lord King has reserved the hunting there for himself'. These Inquisitions imply that the king and his ministers regarded the woods of Wherwell Abbey to be within the royal forest, and within their jurisdiction; meanwhile a widespread disregard for this continued amongst members of the community.

The abbess's original petition of 1343, complaining about the king's claim to Harewood, was followed by Shareshull's enquiry, and that when this failed the abbess petitioned again in 1354. The new complaints co-incided with the beginnings of a big increase in venison cases being submitted at the Inquisitions, which continued into the 1360s, suggesting that the friction was increasing. This view of on-going tension is re-inforced by evidence relating to the abbess's chief forester. A memorandum dated February 1363, included in the cartulary, records that the abbess asked that John Farley, '*rangeour du boys de Harewood* ' should be removed from his office (**331**). She claimed that he had been appointed not by her, but by the king during a vacancy, and that following the death of Abbess Amicia in 1361, issues which should have 'remained in full' to the abbey were seized by John Farley contrary to the tenor of his charter to Abbess Isabella of 1330, which had promised that 'all things touching the abbey' should remain with her own officers in time of voidance (**295**). Isabella had taken enormous pains to

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141 PRO E32/310.

protect the abbey from intrusion during vacancies.[142] The abbey's worst fears were confirmed, then, when John Farley was appointed as ranger 'in the king's forest of Chute and for the keeping of his game of Harewood,' the issue of game being particularly stressed, as well as the claim to royal ownership of the forest.[143] It is perhaps remarkable that the Farley memorandum is followed by a retraction by the king. Edward declared that he would honour his promise to Isabella, and would give permission for the abbess to replace John Farley with someone of her own choosing. This represented an act of pragmatism by the king. Presumably he judged that John Farley's 14 year presence at Wherwell was deeply resented and decided feelings in Wherwell should be appeased.

That John Farley chose to exploit the abbey at the time of the death of Abbess Amicia in 1361 would have been particularly resented considering the efforts Abbess Isabella had made to secure win freedom from interference by the king's ministers during vacancies.[144] All the more so because 1361 was a year of deep crisis at Wherwell. The second coming of the plague had struck Hampshire, and it was this that carried off Abbess Amicia, as well as her successor Constancia. It was during this profoundly difficult time that John Farley had crossed swords with the abbess and convent of Wherwell. It was he who was seen to have exploited Harewood for its venison, and to have shown such disregard for the property of the abbess and her tenants.

Farley may have been considered a representative of the warden of Chute forest, and thus been responsible for the cases which were submitted at the Andover Inquisitions.

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142 See Chapter 3.9 above.
143 *CPR 1350-4*, 67.
144 See n.142, above.

The administration of Chute forest was hereditary, and was in the hands of the Lisle family. However, in 1340, the current holder, Bartholemew, had granted the bailiwick for life to Edmund Archdeacon of Berkshire.[145]

John *de Lisle* II warden 1304-1331

Bartholemew *de Lisle* warden 1331-1345

Edmund *de la Beche* acting warden 1340-1356

John *de Lisle* III warden 1356-1370

From 1340-1356, the affairs of Chute forest were presided over by Edmund, and these are precisely the years in which the friction between Wherwell and the king's ministers was so severe, for John Farley was responsible to Edmund. Perhaps he should be credited with trying to do a good job on behalf of the Lisles, tightening the proceedures in a neglected area of Chute, even if it did annoy the abbess of Wherwell, but in 1356, Edmund was dismissed:

> 'Bartholemew *de Lisle* granted to Edmund *de la Beche* the bailiwick of the forestership of the king's forest of Chute.....but on account of defaults in the matter of keeping thereof while it was in the hands of the said Edmund, it has since been siezed into the king's hands.'[146]

Whether this was to lead to greater or lesser control is open to question. In general terms there is evidence that the forest of Chute, already in decline, had become less lucrative during the fourteenth century and therefore less worthy of the Lisles' careful supervision. Forest officers themselves became slack. A roll for Chute forest survives which lists amercements made on a long list of regarders and verderers who had failed to

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145 *CIPM, VIII*, 426.

turn up to make their returns or failed to bring along offenders for judgement.[147] The king had therefore seen a reduction in the profitability of the forests. In addition to this, there had been severe dis-afforestation in all the royal forests in Wiltshire.[148] Not only would this have led to a decrease in revenue and increasingly complex problems of boundaries, but the royal hunting grounds would have been greatly reduced, too. Savernake, Clarendon, Selwood and others were all affected. Slack returns combined with diminishing opportunities for royal hunting, might have caused the king to exploit Harewood for the first time as a new source of venison, offending the abbess of Wherwell who had long regarded the rights of chase as hers. If Chute forest had been neglected for half a century, then anyone coming in and trying to instill more order would have been resented.

These initiatives might have from the king himself, from the wardens of Chute or from two able and efficient men who were appointed as keepers of the forests south of the Trent; William Wykeham and Peter Atte Wode. The importance of these keepers should not be overlooked. Laxity earlier in the century had not been helped by the frequent changes keepers.[149] The local forest officers like John Farley meanwhile were the men perceived as being responsible for the unwelcome changes.

The suspicion that Chute forest was poorly administered by the Lisles is reinforced by evidence of muddled record keeping, and mislaid rolls and memoranda.[150] Nor was the forest eyre any longer held in regard. The 1330 Eyre was eventually dismissed because 'the people of (the county of Southampton) must attend to their own

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146 *CPR 1354-58*, 468.
147 PRO E32/280.
148 *VCH Wilts IV*, 425; Young (1979), 151.
149 Neilson (1940), 432-3.

affairs in the coming season for the common utility of the king's people.'[151] Elsewhere records show that forest administration was under great strain. For instance in 1373 the steward of Cannock forest was summoned to explain why no payment had been paid into the exchequer for custody of the forest since 1316.[152] Poor record keeping led to shortened memories and encouraged both sides get away with opportunist claims, such as the one about Alfred the Great, which for years went on record as being authentic.[153] The records suggest that there was a determined effort to tighten up the administration of Chute in the 1360s, but the steam had gone out of the efficiency drive by the 1370s and confusion about forest rights and the status of the woods of Wherwell Abbey remained in essence, unresolved.

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150 *CCR 1354-60*, 306.
151 *CCR 1330-33*, 241.
152 *VCH Staffordshire II*, 339.
153 See Chapter 2.1. above.

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